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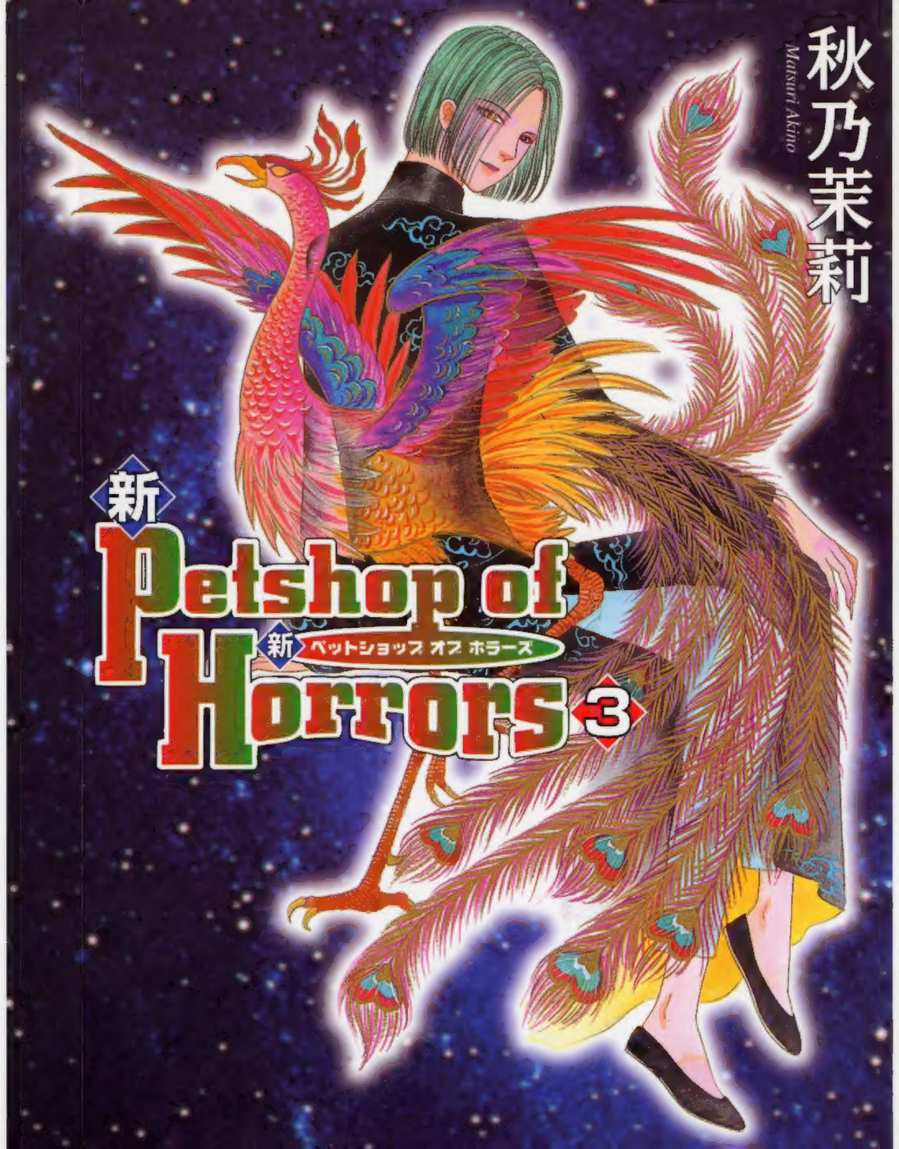

秋乃茉莉
Matsuri Akino

眠れぬ夜の
奇妙な話
コミックス

新 Petshop of Horrors 3

新 ペットショップ オブ ホラーズ

秋乃茉莉

朝日ソノラマ

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朝日ソノラマ

眠れぬ夜の奇妙な話コミックス

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Vol. 2
Pet Shop of Horrors

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Created by Matsuri Akino

Translation - Angela Liu
English Adaptationr - Mike O'Sullivan
Retouch and Lettering - Star Print Brokers
Production Artist - Vicente Rivera, Jr.
Graphic Designer - John Lo

Editor - Alexis Kirsch
Pre-Production Supervisor - Vicente Rivera, Jr.
Pre-Production Specialist - Lucas Rivera
Managing Editor - Vy Nguyen
Senior Designer - Louis Csontos
Senior Designer - James Lee
Senior Editor - Bryce P. Coleman
Senior Editor - Jenna Winterberg
Associate Publisher - Marco F. Pavia
President and C.O.O. - John Parker
C.E.O. and Chief Creative Officer - Stu Levy

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TOKYOPOP Inc.
5900 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 2000
Los Angeles, CA 90036

E-mail: info@TOKYOPOP.com
Come visit us online at www.TOKYOPOP.com

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VOLUME 3

BY

MATSURI AKINO

TOKYOPOP®

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第7話／Deathtrap

JOANNA!!

YOU, TOO...

...I MEAN, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, YOU KNOW?

...THAT'S TRUE.

YOU LOOK A LITTLE THIN.

LONG TIME NO SEE.

THIS MUST BE MISATO, YOUR SON. HELLO--

HELLO.

SARAH! YOU LOOK GOOD.

I'M REALLY SORRY FOR ALL THE TROUBLE ...

I'LL BE SURE TO PAY YOU BACK.

IT'S ALL RIGHT.

TIMES HAVE BEEN TOUGH LATELY. I'M SORRY I CAN'T GIVE YOU MORE.

WHEN I HEARD THAT YOU GOT MARRIED TO A WEALTHY JAPANESE MAN...

...I WAS SURE THAT YOU WOULD BE LIVING THE HIGH LIFE.

.....

ARE THE MONEY PROBLEMS IN YOUR HOUSE REALLY THAT BAD?!

BUT, TO NOT EVEN BE ABLE TO BUY CLOTHES FOR YOU CHILD...

THERE'S A NEW BUILDING THERE THAT WENT UP AFTER YOU QUIT WORKING AT THE STORE.

FROM THE TOP FLOOR DOWN TO THE BASEMENT, THE ENTIRE PLACE HAS CHINESE SPECIALTY SHOPS AND RESTAU-RANTS.

YOU CAN GET THE FEELING OF A WHOLE CHINESE TOWN IN JUST ONE BUILDING.

WHY DON'T YOU GO TO NEO CHINATOWN ON 2ND STREET?

OH!!

I'M SURE MISATO WILL ENJOY IT.

CHINA-TOWN?!

WELCOME TO MY PET SHOP.

寵物店

MY SHOP HAS COMMON ANIMALS LIKE PUPPIES AND KITTENS...

...AS WELL AS ANIMALS THAT BARELY PASS THE C.I.T.E.S LIST.

WELL, WELL. MISS SARAH.

HOW IS THE ROTTWEILER THAT YOU BOUGHT A FEW DAYS AGO?

I NAMED HIM GONZALES. ISN'T THAT CUTE?

IN-DEED ...

WE DON'T NEED ANYTHING THAT DANGEROUS, COUNT. WE WANT SOMETHING NORMAL.

HA HA HA.

COUNT?

DOGGY!

THIS ONE IS A GOLDEN RETRIEVER. HE'S STILL A PUPPY, BUT HE WILL BE A GOOD PLAY PARTNER WHEN HE GROWS UP.

AH! SUCH A CUTE YOUNG BOY.

PLEASE TELL ME IF THERE IS ANY THAT YOU LIKE IN PARTICULAR.

WOOF WOOF

WOW!

Star

MOMMY ...?

THAT BEAGLE WAS ONCE A HUNTING HOUND.

U-UHM! I'M SORRY. I'M NOT ALLOWED TO HAVE PETS AT MY HOME.

...I'M SORRY.

FOR NOW... PLEASE BE PATIENT.

HOW ABOUT A SMALL BIRD OR HAMSTER? THE PRICES FOR THEM ARE REASONABLE, AND THEY ARE EASY TO TAKE CARE OF.

IF YOU CANNOT HAVE A DOG OR A CAT...

Star

WE CAN RENT YOU A PET FOR A FEW HOURS WHENEVER YOU'D LIKE.

PETS ARE GOOD PLAYMATES FOR CHILDREN.

VISITING...?

IF YOU CANNOT HAVE A PET IN YOUR HOME, WE ALSO HAVE A VISITING SERVICE.

THEY CAN ALSO RELIEVE YOU FROM DAILY STRESS AND COMFORT YOU.

OLD FRIEND?

A HOSTESS FRIEND FROM THE RED-LIGHT DISTRICT?

I-I'M SORRY. ON THE WAY BACK FROM MISATO'S REGULAR CHECK-UP, I MET AN OLD FRIEND...

WE'RE HOME!

.....

IF YOU'RE ASKING AROUND FOR NEW JOBS THERE, I WON'T STOP YOU...

...MOTHER.

JOANNA.

WHERE WERE YOU?!

I'M SORRY!

Y-YES!

HIS DIAPER HAS BEEN SMELLING FOR A WHILE.

ANYWAY, HURRY UP AND LOOK AT FATHER.

I'M HOME, DEAR.

Y-YES!

AFTER YOU FINISH WITH THAT, HURRY AND BEGIN PREPARING OUR DINNER!

JOANNA!

I'LL CLEAN YOU UP RIGHT NOW.

I'M SORRY, DEAR.

OH, NO. EVEN YOUR SHEETS GOT DIRTY.

IS SHE A PART OF YOUR BUSINESS, TOO?

IT'S STARTING AGAIN.

PLEASE SHOW MY CUSTOMERS SOME RESPECT.

WAS THAT WOMAN A FILIPINO?

TAIZUU.

YOU SEEM TO BE DOING A LOT OF WORK.

AND OF COURSE, MY SHOP ATTRACTS MANY INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMERS.

THERE ARE PEOPLE OF MANY DIFFERENT NATIONALITIES WORKING IN THIS CITY.

AT THE ENTRANCE OF THIS BUILDING, IN MANY DIFFERENT LANGUAGES...

...THERE ARE TOURISM PAMPHLETS.

IF YOU CAN READ THE PAMPHLET, THEN YOU SHOULD KNOW!

BUSINESS HOURS IN THIS BUILDING ARE FROM 10:00 AM TO 9:00 PM!

WHERE ARE YOU OFF TO NOW?

Guten T

Bonjou

THIS BUILDING IS LIKE ONE "TOWN," RIGHT? THEN IT'S NORMAL TO HAVE STORES WITH EARLIER AND LATER BUSINESS HOURS--

IF THIS IS A "TOWN," THEN I'M THE MAYOR!

YOU THINK I'M GOING TO LET YOU OFF THE HOOK JUST BECAUSE OF THAT?!

THE BAKERY AT THE DEPARTMENT STORE, MARON PRUSSOU, HAS A SALE BEGINNING AT 3:00--

HMMMM. WELL...

SUCH FORCE...

WE'RE NOT LIVING UNDER A DICTATORSHIP HERE. THIS ISN'T THE COLD WAR.

AND IF YOU CAN'T LISTEN TO MY ORDERS, THEN HURRY UP AND LEAVE!

I ADMIRE YOUR BUSINESS PHILOSOPHY... MORE LIKE YOUR BUSINESS SPIRIT!

THE CUSTOMERS HERE ARE MOSTLY JAPANESE WHO WANT TO EXPERIENCE THE FEELING OF A FOREIGN COUNTRY.

FLATTERY WILL GET YOU NOWHERE.

AS THE OWNER, I WORK TO FULFILL THE NEEDS OF MY CUSTOMERS!!

EEEK!

IT WENT OVER THERE!!

CATCH IT!!

WHAT IS IT?!

KYAAAAH!

WHOA!

OH!

HISS

NO...

IT'S A RACCOON!

A WILD DOG?!

WHAT IS IT?!

IT'S BEEN HERE FOR THE PAST COUPLE DAYS.

I THOUGHT IT WAS A CAT OR SOMETHING AT FIRST.

IT MUST HAVE GOTTEN LOST OR RAN AWAY FROM ITS OWNER.

IT CAN'T BE.

A WILD RACCOON...?

WHEN WE TRY TO CATCH IT, IT ENDS UP LIKE THIS.

...AND IT'S VERY VIOLENT.

IT GETS INTO THE TRASH...

DON'T BE SCARED.

HISS

TSK TSK TSK

COME HERE.

SNIFF SNIFF

ARE YOU THE OWNER?

NO, I OWN A PET SHOP NEARBY.

THERE, THERE. IT'S ALL RIGHT NOW.

THEN I GUESS WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO TURN IT INTO THE POLICE.

I CAN TAKE CARE OF IT AT MY SHOP FOR A WHILE.

I WILL TRY LOOKING FOR THE OWNER BY PUTTING UP SOME FLYERS.

THE OWNER IS IRRESPONSIBLE, BUT SO IS THE PERSON WHO SELLS IT.

IF THEY INTRODUCE SOMETHING LIKE THAT HERE, IT MIGHT UPSET THE ECOSYSTEM.

THAT'S A RACCOON FROM A FOREIGN COUNTRY, RIGHT?

THAT LOOKS CUTE, BUT...

...I BET IT GOT VIOLENT AS IT BECAME AN ADULT AND WAS ABANDONED, RIGHT?

There have been a lot of snakes and alligators around lately too.

THE OWNER WON'T SHOW UP.

See!

GWAAR!

THE CHIHUAHUA, AMERICAN SHORTHAIR, AND THE ROTTWEILER...

NOT ONLY PETS...

...LIVESTOCK RAISED FOR THEIR MEAT, FISH THAT SWIM IN THE RIVERS AND LAKES, AS WELL AS THE PLANTS THAT ARE GROWING ALONG THE ROADS...

WELL, IN THAT CASE, MOST OF THE PETS CURRENTLY IN JAPAN ARE NOT FROM THIS COUNTRY.

...EVEN THOSE PIGEONS ARE ORIGINALLY FROM ANOTHER COUNTRY.

SPECIES THAT ORIGINATED IN JAPAN ARE NOW A RARITY.

YOU LOOK VERY NICE, MASARU.

YOUR NEW CLOTHES FIT PERFECTLY.

AH--

WILL YOU PLEASE SIGN THIS DOCUMENT?

FATHER.

OH, BEFORE THAT...

UHM... MRS. REIKO, YOUR CAR IS READY.

VERY WELL.

...I WON'T BE NEEDING ANY DINNER.

I'M GOING TO GO OUT AND EAT WITH MY HUSBAND, SO...

Y-YES.

YES.

MAKE SURE TO SWEEP UP MY ROOM.

UH...WHO ARE YOU AGAIN?

GOODNESS! YOU FORGOT YOUR OWN DAUGHTER'S FACE?

HERE, RIGHT HERE! ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS WRITE YOUR NAME.

.....

AH--

IT DOESN'T MATTER! NOW! JUST SIGN THIS DOCUMENT!

DEAR?!

THAT ISN'T THE BATHROOM!

NOW, I NEED TO START THE LAUNDRY AND CLEAN THE BATHROOMS.

HAVE A GOOD TRIP.

DING

DONG

YES, COMING!

OH, NO. THIS IS TERRIBLE--

BRING ME A NEW SET OF PAJAMAS FOR PAPA.

MISATO.

D...
SERVICES?

I'VE BEEN INFORMED THAT THERE IS A PERSON HERE THAT NEEDS TO BE CARED FOR.

KNOCK

HELLO!

I'M FROM D SERVICES.

THAT'S STRANGE. MY CASE MANAGER CONFIRMED THAT THIS WAS THE CORRECT PLACE.

WE HAVEN'T REQUESTED ANY HELP.

YES... BUT...

MAYBE MRS. REIKO HAD REQUESTED HELP.

THERE'S A LOT OF WORK THAT REQUIRES HEAVY LIFTING, LIKE BATHING HIM, RIGHT?

U-UHM. I'M NOT EXACTLY SURE HOW TO DO THE PAPERWORK THOUGH.

THERE WE ARE.

OH, DEAR!

MY NAME IS... JOANNA.

REALLY? I'M SO SORRY FOR THE MISTAKE!

MY NAME IS RUDY YAMAZAKI.

NO... I AM...

I'M THIS PERSON'S WIFE.

ARE YOU THE MAID HERE?

OH! HELLO. WHAT A WELL-MANNERED BOY.

HELLO.

MISATO.

MOMMY?

COULD IT BE THAT YOU'RE--

YES. I'M ORIGINALLY FROM MANILA.

I SEE.

BUT MY MOTHER WAS UNABLE TO GET PROPERLY MARRIED AND...

...SHE RAISED ME ALONE.

ACTUALLY, MY MOTHER IS FROM A SMALL ISLAND IN THE PHILIPPINES AS WELL.

THEY WERE ALL MIDDLE-AGED JAPANESE MEN THAT HAD A LITTLE BIT OF MONEY. A LITTLE PERVERTED, BUT NICE..

THE CUSTOMERS THAT CAME IN ALL LOOKED THE SAME.

I CAME TO JAPAN FOUR YEARS AGO.

I WAS WORKING AT A PUB IN SHINJUKU.

EVEN THOUGH HE WAS OLD ENOUGH TO BE MY FATHER, I EVENTUALLY FELL IN LOVE WITH HIM.

HE PAID FOR AN APARTMENT FOR ME TO LIVE IN AND I BECAME HIS LOVER.

IT WAS THERE THAT I MET HIM.

THIS IS A RARE TREAT.

HERE'S A SOUVENIR FROM MY TRIP.

BUT WHEN I TOLD HIM THAT I HAD HIS BABY IN ME...

LET'S GET MARRIED!

That's wonderful!!

I WOULD BE THROWN OUT AS SOON AS HE GOT TIRED OF ME.

THAT I SHOULDN'T GET ATTACHED.

THE MAMA OF THE BAR AND THE OTHERS ALL SAID THE SAME THING.

...I WAS VERY HAPPY.

WHEN MISATO WAS BORN...

...THAT HE WAS THE PRESIDENT OF A BIG COMPANY.

I FOUND OUT AFTER WE GOT MARRIED...

AFTER THAT, HE COULDN'T EVEN RECOGNIZE MISATO OR MYSELF.

IT WAS ALMOST LIKE HE REVERTED TO BEING A BABY.

MY HUSBAND SUDDENLY PASSED OUT ONE DAY.

BUT THAT ENDED A LITTLE AFTER A YEAR.

AND THOSE PEOPLE DON'T HELP CARE FOR HIM?

SO THE THREE OF YOU LIVE IN THIS BIG HOUSE TOGETHER?

...EVERYONE IS VERY... BUSY.

NO, THE ELDEST DAUGHTER AND SON THAT HE HAD WITH HIS PREVIOUS WIFE ALSO LIVE HERE.

ON TOP OF THAT, I'M A FOREIGNER WHO WAS WORKING IN A QUESTIONABLE BUSINESS.

THAT WAS UNDERSTANDABLE, SINCE THEIR NEW MOTHER WAS GOING TO BE YOUNGER THAN THEM.

ALL THE DAUGHTERS WERE AGAINST ME MARRYING HIM.

AMIDST THE CONFUSION OF MY HUSBAND'S ILLNESS...

...WE WERE ABOUT TO BE KICKED OUT OF THE HOUSE.

MISATO IS THE YOUNGEST CHILD, BUT...

...THEY SAID THAT THEY DIDN'T WANT AN IMPURE LITTLE BROTHER.

I STILL BELIEVE THAT YOU'LL GET BETTER.

DEAR.

BUT...

...THEY SAID THAT I COULD STAY IF I TOOK CARE OF MY HUSBAND.

THAT'S WHY...

FEEL FREE TO TALK TO ME ABOUT ANYTHING.

PLEASE DON'T TAKE EVERYTHING ON YOURSELF.

THAT'S ONE OF THE REASONS I'M HERE.

THANK YOU.

RUDY...

PLEASE DON'T SAY THINGS LIKE THAT IN FRONT OF THE CHILD.

OH, DON'T WORRY... IT'S PART OF THE CELEBRATION OF MASARU'S ENTRANCE INTO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

HA HA HA.

WITH THIS, THE INHERITANCE WILL ALL BE UNDER OUR NAME.

...IF HOMECARE IS TOO MUCH TROUBLE, WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST SEND HIM TO A NURSING HOME?

I CAN'T!!

IF WE DID SOMETHING LIKE THAT, EVERYONE WOULD FIND OUT THAT FATHER HAS DEMENTIA.

WHAT A SELFISH MAN MY FATHER WAS. HE DID WHATEVER HE WANTED AND THEN IN THE END...

...HE BECOMES SENILE AND CAUSES US ALL THIS TROUBLE.

BEFORE THAT HAPPENS, WE HAVE TO MAKE IT LOOK LIKE HE TURNED HIS COMPANY OVER TO YOU.

IF MY WEAK OLDER BROTHER BECOMES THE COMPANY OWNER, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS WILL TAKE OVER THE COMPANY.

EVEN THOUGH HE'S ABSENT, THE COMPANY CONTINUES TO FUNCTION UNDER HIS NAME.

AND THEN, MASARU WILL EVENTUALLY TAKE OVER THE COMPANY AS THE THIRD GENERATION.

ESPECIALLY NOT THAT FILIPINO AND HER CHILD!!

IF MY FATHER HAD DIED, WE WOULD HAVE HAD HALF THE INHERITANCE STOLEN AWAY BY THAT WOMAN!!

HMPH! THOSE FAILURES COULDN'T SUSTAIN THE KAWARAI FAMILY NAME!

YOUR BROTHER HAS A WIFE AND CHILD, EVEN IF SHE IS A GIRL.

NOW, NOW. MASARU IS STILL FINISHING PRESCHOOL.

AND THEN THERE'S YOUR YOUNGER SISTER, KYOKO, AND YOUNGER BROTHER, KOUJI.

I WANT TO HURRY UP AND KICK THEM OUT.

NOT MY OLDER BROTHER ...

...OR MY YOUNGER ONE.

Divorce Papers

HA HA HA.

I HAVE FATHER'S SIGNATURE.

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!

MY MASARU IS THE ONE WHO WILL INHERIT THIS HOUSE.

SMARTER THAN EVERYONE AND...

... BEAUTIFUL.

DEAR, IT'S ALMOST TIME FOR LUNCH. PLEASE WAIT.

TAP TAP

IT'S ALREADY THIS LATE?

OH, NO ...

I'LL LEAVE THIS PACKAGE THAT WAS JUST DELIVERED--

OH, THAT'S RIGHT!

WHY DON'T YOU EAT DOWNSTAIRS WITH US SOMETIME?

SILENCE

SIGH ...

THEN...I'LL PUT YOUR FOOD IN THE SAME PLACE I ALWAYS DO.

SLAM

KOUJI.

KNOCK

KNOCK

UHM, YOUR LUNCH IS READY.

MISATO?! WHAT HAPPENED?!

BIG BROTHER MASARU HIT ME!

あーん

わーわーわーわー

BIG BROTHER WAS CUTTING THE FLOWERS.

HIC...

WHEN I TOLD HIM HE SHOULDN'T ...

HE HIT ME.

MY...

WHAT HAPPENED?

SNIFF

I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING!

WHAT HAP-PENED?

MASARU, YOU SHOULDN'T TEASE LITTLE CHILDREN.

YOU HAVE TO APOLOGIZE.

MASARU, YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT.

THESE ARE PAPA'S TREASURED FLOWERS.

WHAT DID YOU SAY?!

SHUT UP!!

YOU'RE JUST A SERVANT!!

DON'T ORDER ME AROUND!!

HAAWS!

MASARU?!

OH! MOTHER!

WHAT'S ALL THE NOISE?

HE WAS CUTTING UP PAPA'S FLOWERS--

MASARU WAS THE ONE WHO HIT MISATO FIRST.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?!

I-I DIDN'T!

WHAT DID YOU SAY?!

AUNT JOANNA HIT ME!

WHAT HAP-PEN-ED?!

W-WAIT A MOMENT!

LIKE MOTHER, LIKE CHILD!

THE SAME TO THE VERY END!

WHAT?!

HOW HORRIBLE TO BLAME YOUR CHILD'S MISTAKES ON OTHERS!

MASARU WOULD NEVER DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT!

!!

CLATTER

...PLEASE TELL YOUR SISTER WHAT REALLY HAPPENED...

KOUJI, IF YOU WERE WATCHING ...

NO.

YOU DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG, MISATO.

MOMMY?

I'M SORRY.

I HAVE TO PROTECT HIM!

IF ONLY THIS CHILD...

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR WORK.

HELLO, IT'S D SERVICES.

PAPA, TODAY THE WEATHER IS NICE SO LET'S GO OUT ON A WALK.

...WHAT'S WRONG, JOANNA?

Y-YES.

PING

PONG

HUH ...

J-JOANNA?

...HUH?

JOANNA, YOU HAVE WRINKLES ON YOUR FOREHEAD.

D&H

THAT'S A WASTE OF YOUR BEAUTY.

BUT KABUKI-CHO HAS A LOT OF PEOPLE WITH MIXED BLOOD LIKE ME...

AND THERE ARE SOME GOOD JAPANESE PEOPLE, TOO.

I MADE IT THROUGH BY SMILING AND NOT LETTING THOSE KINDS OF PEOPLE GET ME DOWN.

WHEN I THINK THAT HE WILL CONTINUE TO BE BULLIED AS LONG AS WE STAY IN THIS COUNTRY...

REALLY?

BUT, TO INVOLVE MISATO...

IF IT WERE JUST ME, I COULD TAKE IT.

WHEN I WAS LITTLE I WAS BULLIED A LOT, TOO.

I WENT BACK TO MY MOTHER'S VILLAGE ONCE, BUT...

...I DIDN'T KNOW THEIR LANGUAGE...

...AND THE VILLAGERS TREATED ME LIKE AN OUTSIDER AS WELL.

I WONDER IF MISATO WILL BE ABLE TO GROW LIKE YOU, RUDY.

HE'LL HAVE TO.

HE WILL.

NO.

BUT WE STILL HAVE TO LIVE HERE.

WE HAVE NOWHERE TO GO.

WE MIXED-BLOODS ARE NEITHER JAPANESE NOR FILIPINO.

RUDY...

...AND YOU THINK YOU CAN'T GO ON HERE...

...IF NOTHING ELSE WORKS...

IN THE END...

JOANNA ...

HEY, IT'S OKAY.

IT'S NOT REALLY THAT TOUGH TO DO.

HUH?

...YOU CAN RUN AWAY FROM THIS HOUSE.

...IF IT'S OKAY WITH YOU, JOANNA...

...TOGETHER WITH MISATO...

UHM...

I'M NOT AS RICH AS PAPA, BUT...

...WE COULD GO TO A TOWN WHERE NO ONE KNOWS US--

RUDY...

EVEN IF YOU WEREN'T HERE, SUCH A WELL-OFF HOUSE COULD AFFORD TO GET SOMEONE ELSE TO HELP HIM.

I...IT'S PAPA...

I CAN'T LEAVE HIM.

...NO!

JOANNA?

JUST FOR A MOMENT.

I STARTED THINKING... IF ONLY PAPA WASN'T AROUND.

I THOUGHT MAYBE I'D BE RELEASED FROM THIS HOUSE IF THAT HAPPENED.

.....

I'M SORRY, DEAR!

I'LL ALWAYS ... ALWAYS ...

...BE HERE FOR YOU...

OH! JOANNA, YOU CAN WAIT AT THE HOUSE.

RUDY?! BUT...

OKAY THEN, PAPA.

TODAY, WE'LL GO OUT FOR A LONG WALK.

Sigh.

I UNDER-STAND.

YOU SHOULD JUST TAKE A MOMENT TO RELAX, JOANNA.

THAT'S THE REASON WE HAVE THIS SERVICE...

RUDY...

...I'M SORRY.

SO, YOU WERE NOT THROWN AWAY IN SHINJUKU, BUT...

EXACTLY!

...ON YOUR WAY FROM ASAKUSA TO MT. KOUNO.

I SEE.

店物寵

VILLAGE?!

I HEARD THAT THERE WAS A VILLAGE OF OUTCAST WILD RACCOONS IN THE MIDDLE OF MT. KOUNO.

THAT'S WHEN I HEARD THE RUMORS.

BUT I WAS BORN AND RAISED IN ASAKUSA.

HUMANS CALL US OUTSIDERS!

WHERE DO THEY WANT US TO GO BACK TO?!

WELL, I HEARD IT WAS A TYPE OF COMMUNITY.

IT'S THE PERFECT PLACE FOR US TO LIVE. IT DOESN'T INTERFERE WITH THE BOUNDARIES OF ANY OTHER ANIMALS.

GOOD QUESTION.

SEE YOU.

I'M SICK OF LIVING IN SUCH A CONSTRICTED PLACE WITH HUMANS.

SORRY, LITTLE LADY.

YOU CAN JUST STAY AT THE SHOP.

DON'T GO SOMEWHERE LIKE THAT...

You'll be able to eat snacks every day, too.

HOW MANLY...

...BOTH HUMANS AND ANIMALS...

...CAN'T SURVIVE IN A COUNTRY FOREIGN TO THEM

WELL...IT JUST GOES TO SHOW...

DEAR!!!

PAPA!!

-KKKK

PAPA ISN'T BREATHING!

WHAT'S WRONG? IT'S VERY EARLY.

WHO COULD'VE DONE THIS?

NO!

IT'S NO USE!

HIS HEART HAS ALREADY STOPPED.

FATHER ...?!

DEAR, CALL AN AMBU-LANCE!!

I-IT COULDN'T BE--

WHO WOULD...?!

WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS?!

THE ARTIFICIAL BREATHING TUBE HAS BEEN CUT!!

YOU SAID SO, MAMA.

THAT...IT WOULD BE GOOD IF YOUR FATHER DIED QUICKLY.

MASARU?!

THIS IS GOOD, MAMA.

THAT'S WHY I...

...THOUGHT THAT YOU WOULD BE REALLY HAPPY.

MASARU?!

AND WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN, KYOKO?!

KOUJI DOESN'T SHOW HIS FACE EVEN ON A DAY LIKE THIS.

WELL, IT'S THE SAME IF HE'S HERE OR NOT ANYWAY.

.....

STOP IT, BOTH OF YOU!

YOU DIDN'T EVEN VISIT FATHER ONCE THE ENTIRE TIME.

OH, AS IF YOU DID, BIG BROTHER--

EITHER WAY, IT WAS SOMETHING A CHILD DID SO HE SHOULDN'T BE PUNISHED FOR IT, BUT...

IT WAS BECAUSE OF MASARU, I HEARD.

IT DIDN'T GET OUT TO THE PUBLIC, BUT I KNOW THE REAL CAUSE OF FATHER'S DEATH.

OH, BIG SISTER.

I KNOW WHAT HAPPENED.

...

STOP IT ALREADY!! BOTH OF YOU!

KYAAAH!

YOU'VE GOT SOME NERVE!

...IF THIS CAME OUT IN PUBLIC, THAT CHILD'S FUTURE WOULD BE...

OH, SHUT UP!

GULP!

I APOLOGIZE FOR GATHERING YOU DURING THIS TIME OF MOURNING, BUT I AM HERE TO PASS ON HIS WILL.

MY REGARDS TO THE FAMILY OF THE DECEASED.

IT LOOKS LIKE EVERYONE IS HERE.

MR. ASANO!!

BUT, SIR, THIS WOMAN IS NO LONGER PART OF THE KAWARAI FAMILY.

NO, THE WIDOW NEEDS TO BE PRESENT AT THIS TIME.

OH, YES.

JOANNA, PLEASE TAKE YOUR LEAVE NOW.

HUH?

HALF OF THE INHERI-TANCE GOES TO HIS WIFE, JOANNA.

THE REST WILL BE DIVIDED AMONG THE FIVE CHILDREN-- THAT IS ALL.

...THE INHERITANCE OF THE DEPARTED, WITH THE ADDITION OF HIS STOCKS AND ASSETS, COMES TO A TOTAL OF ONE BILLION YEN.

AND SO...

NO, I WILL HAVE HER STAND HERE AS HIS WIDOW.

HUH?!

MY FATHER AND JOANNA HAVE ALREADY COMPLETED THEIR DIVORCE. SHE SHOULD NOT BE IN THE INHERITANCE AT ALL!!

WAIT A MOMENT!!

IN OTHER WORDS, THE TWO OF THEM WERE RE-MARRIED.

BUT, A DAY LATER ON OCTOBER 23RD, THEY ALSO RECEIVED MARRIAGE DOCUMENTS.

WHAT DID YOU SAY?!

N-NO WAY, WHEN DID--

...THE DIVORCE PAPERS WERE RECEIVED BY THE WARD OFFICE.

IT'S TRUE. ON OCTOBER 22, 2005...

EXACTLY WHO DID...? HOW DID THE DOCUMENTS--?

MR. KAWARAI, HIMSELF.

THAT CAN'T BE!

MY FATHER HAD DEMENTIA, THERE'S NO WAY HE COULD HAVE SIGNED IT HIMSELF--

WHAT?!

REIKO!!

AH!

DEMENTIA?

I SEE...

WHAT DID YOU SAY?

WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS, SISTER?!

...FROM MR. KAWARAI TO THE ELDEST DAUGHTER'S FAMILY?

THAT RAISES OTHER QUESTIONS. LIKE, WHY, IN THE PAST YEAR, A LARGE AMOUNT OF THE COMPANY STOCK WAS PASSED DOWN...

THEN I WONDER WHO SUBMITTED THOSE DOCUMENTS A DAY BEFORE.

JUST IN CASE, WE HAD THE PRIMARY PHYSICIAN AND PUBLIC NOTARY PRESENT DURING THE MEETING.

THIS WILL IS VALID ON ALL TERMS.

TH-THEN FATHER--

...DURING THE ENTIRE MEETING, HE SHOWED NO SIGNS OF DEMENTIA.

HE WAS IN A WHEELCHAIR, BUT...

THAT'S THE SAME DAY THAT HE WENT ON A WALK WITH RUDY.

JUST A FEW DAYS AGO, I WAS ABLE TO MEET THE MAN HIMSELF.

ANY-WAY.

THAT--"I HAVE BEEN WATCHING EVERYTHING."

HE ALSO SAID THIS DURING THAT TIME.

COUGH

WE RECON-STRUCTED HIS CURRENT WILL.

HE WAS JUST FAKING HIS DEMENTIA?!

TH-THEN FATHER WAS...

"I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN WATCHING."

"AFTER I FELL ILL, I TOOK NOTE OF JUST WHAT MY FAMILY *HAD DONE* FOR ME, AND WHAT MY FAMILY *HADN'T DONE* FOR ME."

DEAR, YOU WERE ABLE TO HEAR MY WORDS?!

"BUT YOU ARE STILL VERY YOUNG."

"I WANT YOU TO LIVE YOUR SECOND LIFE FREELY."

"AND LOOK AFTER MISATO."

THERE IS ALSO A MESSAGE FOR YOU, MA'AM.

"THANK YOU FOR BEING WITH ME UNTIL THE END."

"DO NOT MAKE THE MISTAKES IN RAISING HIM AS I MADE WITH MY CHILDREN."

...ARE JUST THE TWO OF US GOING TO LIVE IN THIS GIANT HOUSE?

WITH MRS. REIKO'S FAMILY AND...

...HER BROTHER OUT OF THE HOUSE...

HUH?!

PING PONG

GOOD AFTER-NOON.

COULD IT BE RUDY?!

YEEES!

YOU'RE FROM THE PET SHOP--

Y-YOU ARE...

THERE IS SO MUCH I WANT TO ASK YOU--

OH! A DOGGY!

...I THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD BE AROUND THIS TIME THAT YOUR SITUATION MIGHT CHANGE.

A FEW DAYS AGO YOU SAID YOU WERE UNABLE TO HAVE A PET AT HOME, BUT...

FORGIVE MY INTRUSION.

.....

DO YOU LIKE HIM? HE IS A MIXED BREED, BUT HAS A VERY GOOD HEART.

I WOULD LIKE TO RECOMMEND HIM AS A FITTING PARTNER FOR YOUR NEW LIFE.

CHAPTER 7 END

第8話／Double exposure

YES. THESE PAST TWO OR THREE DAYS, THE LADIES AT THIS SHOP HAVE BEEN FEELING UNWELL.

LADIES?!

A COLD?!

OH...OF COURSE...

I MEAN THE PETS IN THE SHOP.

Y-YES, TAIZUU.

TCH!

WE'RE LEAVING, CHIN!

YOU CAN'T SUDDENLY CLOSE YOUR STORE FOR A REASON LIKE THAT WITHOUT EVEN TALKING TO THE BUILDING OWNER!

VERY WELL. EVERYONE SEEMS TO BE FEELING MUCH BETTER. I WILL OPEN THE DOORS AGAIN STARTING TOMORROW.

?

OH, COUNT D, THIS IS FOR YOU.

CHIN! HURRY UP!

Y- YES!

OH, MY...

THESE ARE SWEETS FROM THE DEPARTMENT STORE BAKERY. YOU HAVEN'T BEEN OUT FOR THE PAST THREE DAYS, SO--

.....

AT THIS RATE, YOU CAN'T WORK.

WHY DON'T YOU GO HOME TONIGHT?

AI, ARE YOU OKAY?

ROSEN

ROSEN

KYAAAH!

I-I'M VERY SORRY...

HMM.

SHE'S BEEN UNWELL FOR THE PAST TWO OR THREE DAYS, BUT SHE PUSHED HERSELF...

IT SEEMS SHE MADE HER COLD WORSE.

HFF

HFF

BUT, COME TO THINK OF IT, SHE SAID HER ROOMMATE IS ALSO FROM HANOI.

THAT GIRL IS ALSO AT HOME TRYING TO GET OVER A COLD.

HAS SHE GONE BACK TO HER COUNTRY RECENTLY?

NO, THAT'S NOT THE PROBLEM RIGHT NOW.

NO, SHE HASN'T GONE ANYWHERE FOR THE PAST YEAR...

THE WOMAN... WHERE IS SHE FROM?

HANOI IN VIETNAM.

UHM... SHE HAS A VISA.

SHE HAS THE SAME SYMPTOMS.

HUFF

HUFF

WHAT A TERRIBLE FEVER.

WE HAVE TO GET HER ON A STRETCHER.

WAIT A MOMENT!!

GULP!

NONE OF THE CUSTOMERS OR WORKERS MAY LEAVE.

WE ARE NOW PUTTING THIS BUILDING UNDER QUARANTINE.

WHAT?!

WHAT IS THIS RACKET?

IS THIS AN ILLEGAL GAMBLING RAID?

WE WILL RETURN YOU TO YOUR HOMES AS SOON AS WE HAVE DONE SOME BLOOD TESTS.

A PERSON WITH SYMPTOMS WAS IN THIS BUILDING.

DOES EVERYONE KNOW ABOUT THIS? THE AVIAN FLU?!

I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF A DELIVERY...

DON'T JOKE AROUND! WE JUST CAME TO GET A DRINK!!

I UNDER-STAND, PLEASE STAY CALM.

THE LONGEST IT WOULD TAKE IS THREE DAYS.

THE EARLIEST IS EIGHT HOURS.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO HAVE THE RESULTS BACK?

BUT THERE AREN'T ANY POULTRY PLANTS IN SHINJUKU, RIGHT?!

AND WE TEST ALL OF OUR MEAT.

WHERE ELSE WOULD THERE BE A LOT OF BIRDS...?

THE AVIAN FLU?!

店物寵

WE ARE FROM THE PUBLIC HEALTH CENTER OF SHINJUKU.

WEL-COME.

THIS STORE CARRIES DIFFERENT KINDS OF ANIMALS FROM THE OLD TO NEW, AND FROM THE EAST TO WEST--

THERE WAS A CASE OF THE AVIAN FLU IN THIS AREA YESTERDAY.

YOU'RE GOING TO VACCINATE THE BIRDS?

PLEASE SHOW US ALL OF THE BIRDS YOU HAVE IN THIS SHOP.

...WOULD YOU LIKE TO BUY ALL OF THEM?

NO. WE ARE GOING TO PUT ALL OF THE BIRDS HERE TO SLEEP.

WHAT PROOF DO YOU HAVE THAT THIS SHOP'S BIRDS ARE THE ORIGIN?!

DON'T TOUCH THEM--

MAKE SURE TO SEAL THE DEAD BODIES AND BURY THEM.

MAKE SURE TO GET THEM ALL.

WA--

WAIT A MOMENT, PLEASE!

TAIZUU.

IT SEEMS LIKE THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT SENT THE ORDER.

IT'S NOT JUST HERE. THE BIRDS IN ALL OF THE PET SHOPS IN KABUKI-CHO ARE BEING ELIMINATED.

STO--

CHIRP CHIRP CHIRP CHIRP

STOP IT!

IF NEED BE, I CAN PAY FOR IT FROM MY OWN POCKET.

.....

GIVE IT UP.

IT LOOKS LIKE THEY'LL GIVE YOU ENOUGH MONEY TO COVER THE COST OF THE BIRDS.

HM HM HM

THEY'RE THE SAME AS CHICKENS AND DUCKS WE EAT AT RESTAURANTS.

HMPH!

NO MATTER WHAT KIND OF EXPENSIVE PARROT OR BEAUTIFUL CANARY, A BIRD IS A BIRD!!

YES...

THAT IS TRUE.

.....

YOU CAN'T PRETEND TO LOVE ONE KIND AND THEN NOT CARE ABOUT THE OTHER!!

THE BIRDS USED FOR FOOD, AS WELL...

THE MASSES OF SPARROWS AND CROWS THAT LIVE AROUND HERE...

PARROTS AND CANARIES...

THEY ARE ALL THE SAME LIFE.

THE WEIGHT OF THEM...

...DOES NOT CHANGE.

IT HAS BEEN CONFIRMED THAT THE FIRST PATIENT HAD TYPE H5N1 BIRD INFLUENZA.

おおーっ

THE VIRUS THAT ENTERS THE HUMAN BODY BEGINS TO CHANGE WITHIN 24 HOURS AND GETS PASSED ON TO OTHER HUMANS.

AS IT CONTINUES TO PASS FROM HUMAN TO HUMAN IT STARTS TO EVOLVE INTO SOMETHING THAT HUMANS CANNOT CONTAIN.

AT THIS TIME, WE HAVE NO WAY TO MAKE A VACCINE AND CANNOT TAKE PREVENTIVE MEASURES.

AND IN THE CAPITAL, TOKYO!!

SO IT'S FINALLY HIT JAPAN...!!

LUCKILY, THE FIRST PATIENT IS HEADING TOWARD RECOVERY.

...BUT FROM PERSON TO PERSON.

THE PROBLEM IS NOT THE MOVEMENT OF THE DISEASE FROM BIRD TO PERSON...

...THERE IS A CHANCE OF OVER A MILLION DEATHS IN JAPAN ALONE.

...AND THE SPANISH FLU THAT KILLED OVER 40,000,000 PEOPLE IN EUROPE 80 YEARS AGO...

IF THIS NEW TYPE OF INFLUENZA STARTS AN EPIDEMIC, THEN LIKE THE SARS CASE A YEAR AGO...

THE VIRUS IS MOVING FROM PERSON TO PERSON...

THE CRISIS HAS NOW HIT THE NEXT LEVEL.

THE BARTENDER WHO WORKED AT THE SAME BUILDING AS THAT HOSTESS HAS JUST STARTED SHOWING SYMPTOMS OF THE AVIAN FLU!

WHAT DID YOU SAY?!

SLAM

IT'S TERRIBLE, GOVERNOR!

SO, IT'S AS WE FEARED!

THE HIGHWAYS, SUBWAYS ... ALL TRANSPORTATION HAS BEEN STOPPED?!

WHAT'S GOING ON?!

LET US PASS!

KABUKI-CHO IS NOW QUARANTINED TO THE PUBLIC.

YESTERDAY A NEW STRAIN OF BIRD INFLUENZA EMERGED IN THIS CITY.

NONE OF THE CITIZENS, WORKERS IN THE AREA, TOURISTS OR SHOPPERS ARE ALLOWED TO LEAVE!!

...ARE NO LONGER ALLOWED TO MOVE IN AND OUT OF THE BORDERS.

THE PEOPLE IN THE AREA LIVING ON YASUKUNI STREET, MEIJI STREET, SHOKUAN STREET AND SEIBU STATION FRONT STREET...

HEY! WHAT'S GOING ON?!

WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO ME?

I HAVE TO GO BACK HOME!

I HAVE ANOTHER JOB AFTER THIS!

NO WAY, WE JUST CAME TO WATCH A MOVIE!

I REPEAT, THIS IS A MESSAGE FROM THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT: KABUKI-CHO HAS BEEN QUARANTINED!

...PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN HERE IN THE PAST WEEK. ALL OF YOU MUST GO TO THE NEAREST HOSPITAL AND HAVE AN IMMEDIATE CHECK-UP!!

THIS IS A MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNMENT TO ALL PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN KABUKI-CHO AND ARE CURRENTLY WORKING IN THE AREA AS WELL AS...

NO WAY... THAT'S AGAINST PRIVACY LAWS!!

YOU!! I'M ABE FROM THE SENATE!! I HAVE AN IMPORTANT MEETING SOON!

WE'RE ABOUT TO DO A TV SHOOT AT ODAIBA--

HEY, YOU KNOW US, RIGHT?!

FOR PEOPLE WHO DO NOT HAVE IDENTIFICATION, PLEASE WRITE DOWN YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS!!

PLEASE COMPLY WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S ORDERS! BE SURE TO SHOW PROPER IDENTIFI-CATION!!

PLEASE WAIT TO HAVE YOUR BLOOD TESTED.

ADULTS, CHILDREN, AND FOREIGN-ERS...

THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS!!

NOT EVEN A SINGLE MOUSE WILL BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE!

NO HUMAN FROM THIS AREA--

NO!

WE HAVE TO LEAVE HERE NO MATTER WHAT.

IF MY COMPANY FINDS OUT, I'LL BE FIRED IMMEDIATELY.

MY WIFE'S GOING TO KILL ME WHEN SHE FINDS OUT I WAS PLAYING AROUND IN KABUKI-CHO.

THIS IS BAD! IF IT'S FOUND OUT THAT WE'RE ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS, WE'LL BE THROWN INTO THE IMMIGRATION CELLS!

HEE HEE!

SPLISH

AH!

STOP!!

I WON'T LET YOU PASS HERE.

THEY'RE EVEN IN A PLACE LIKE THIS--

YEAH !!

SHIT! LET'S FORCE OUR WAY THROUGH.

HEE HEE! THIS PLACE ISN'T SO BAD AFTER ALL!

IF WE KEEP GOING DOWN THIS PATH, WE'LL HIT YOTSUYA!

W-WAIT A SECOND!

WE'RE JUST CIVILIANS!

TH-THEY SHOT AT US!

EEEEK!

BANG

BANG

WE WILL NOT LET ANYONE OUT OF KABUKI-CHO!

GO BACK!

IF ANYONE GOES AGAINST THE ORDERS THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS ORDAINED...

THIS ISN'T A WARNING, IT'S AN ORDER!!

...WE'VE BEEN ORDERED TO USE FIREPOWER IF NECESSARY!

FOOD AND EMERGENCY SUPPLIES ARE SENT IN FROM THE OUTSIDE AND PLACES TO STAY HAVE BEEN ASSIGNED.

THEY'RE EVEN TAKING OUT THE TRASH AND DISPOSING OF IT FOR US.

THERE ARE ABOUT 100,000 PEOPLE CURRENTLY IN KABUKI-CHO.

YES.

IS IT ALL RIGHT TO CONTINUE BUSINESS IN THE BUILDING?!

"AS LONG AS YOU DO NOT GO OUT OF THE AREA, YOU MAY DO AS YOU WISH."

THAT'S HOW THE GOVERNMENT IS CALMING THEM.

...I SEE.

BUT BOTH THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE HERE AND THE OUTSIDERS ARE ALL GETTING STRESSED FROM BEING STUCK HERE.

"IT'S LIKE THIS SECTION IS A DESERTED ISLAND NOW.

YES, IT'S AS IF THIS PLACE IS AN INDEPENDENT COUNTRY.

HMPH.

I'LL BE THIS CITY'S KING--NO...

THIS LITTLE ISLAND IS NOT ENOUGH.

SOMEDAY I WILL HAVE THE ENTIRE CAPITAL UNDER MY POWER.

AND WE CAN WATCH AS MANY MOVIES AS WE WANT, SO WE SHOULD PLAY AROUND AS MUCH AS WE CAN.

ALL THE FOOD AND DRINK IS FREE.

I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT.

IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT-- YOU'LL HAVE DOCUMENTS THAT SAY YOU WERE STUCK IN KABUKI-CHO. ♡

THIS SUCKS. IF I MISS THIS WEEK OF SCHOOL, I'M SURE TO FAIL THE YEAR.

HEY, MO--

MOMMY ...?

COUGH

COUGH

MOMMY, ARE YOU OKAY?

COUGH

COUGH

MOMMY?!

NEWS

A PART-TIME WORKER AT A CONVENIENCE STORE.

AS WELL AS A SEEMINGLY UNRELATED CASE OF A MOTHER IN A MOVIE THEATER.

THEN THE MALE WORKER WHO WENT IN AND OUT OF THE SAME BUILDING.

THE FIRST VICTIM WAS ONE WHO WORKED TOGETHER WITH THE FIRST PATIENT AT THE HOSTESS BAR.

A PERSON WITH THE PERSON-TO-PERSON VIRUS STRAIN HAS NOW DIED.

BUT...IT LOOKS LIKE WE CAN NO LONGER CONTAIN THE GROWTH OF THE EPIDEMIC!

THEY'VE ALREADY BEEN ADMITTED TO THE NEARBY HOSPITAL.

THEN, IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THE PEOPLE IN THAT MOVIE THEATER ARE AFFECTED--

WHAT HAPPENED TO *THOSE* PEOPLE?

PLEASE CALM DOWN.

WE ARE CURRENTLY MAKING A VACCINE.

WE WILL RELEASE EVERYONE AS SOON AS THE VACCINE IS COMPLETED!

THAT'S RIGHT!! HURRY UP AND LET US OUT!

LET US OUT!!

IF WE'RE IN SUCH A SMALL AREA, HEALTHY PEOPLE WILL BECOME AFFECTED, TOO!

WAIT A SECOND!!

STOP!!

Border

WE'RE THE HEAD GANG OF SHINJUKU! WE AIN'T SCARED OF NO POLICE!

SHUD-DAP!!

WHO DO YOU THINK WE ARE?!

GET OUT! GET OUT! GET OUT OF MY WAY!

?!

WAAAH!

YEAAAH!

ALL RIGHT, NOW IS THE CHANCE FOR US TO ESCAPE AS WELL!

?!

ゴゴゴ

THIS IS NOT A WARNING!

THIS IS AN ORDER !!

YOU ARE NOT ALLOWED TO LEAVE KABUKI-CHO!

GET BACK, EVERYONE!

WE WILL TAKE THE NECESSARY MEASURES TO PUNISH ANY WHO DO NOT FOLLOW THIS ORDER!

I REPEAT, THIS IS NOT A WARNING!

IS THIS REALLY THE SAME SHINJUKU...?

I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS IS HAPPENING IN MODERN-DAY JAPAN!!

P-PLEASE HOLD ON A MOMENT.

WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF AN ATTACK.

FLSH

THIS IS UNACCEPTABLE IN A DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY!

IS JAPAN TRYING TO DEVOLVE BACK TO MILITARY RULE?!

PRIME MINISTER!

THAT VIDEO WAS JUST SHOWN LIVE ALL OVER THE WORLD!

WE'RE GETTING CALLS FROM EVERYWHERE ABOUT THE ACTIONS WE'VE TAKEN!

WAIT A MOMENT, PLEASE!

WE UNDERSTAND THIS IS A FORCEFUL WAY OF DOING THINGS, BUT...

...WE BELIEVE THAT IT WAS A NECESSARY MEASURE TO KEEP THE DISEASE QUARANTINED!

IF WE CAN RID OURSELVES OF THOSE VERMIN ALL AT ONCE--

THE YAKUZA, PROSTITUTION AND ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS.

THESE ARE THE TYPES OF PEOPLE THAT HURT OUR SOCIETY.

THAT'S RIGHT! KABUKI-CHO IS AN UGLY SCAR THAT JAPAN TRIES TO HIDE.

THE VICTIMS ARE CURRENTLY ONLY FROM KABUKI-CHO...

TO SAVE THE JAPANESE PEOPLE--NO, TO SAVE THE WORLD...

...A FEW CASUALTIES CAN'T BE HELPED.

THERE ARE ALSO A LOT OF TOURISTS AND CIVILIANS LIVING THERE!

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?!

THAT'S RIGHT! THAT'S RIGHT!

PRIME MINISTER!! YOUR DECISION!

PRIME MINISTER?!

IT LOOKS LIKE THE ELECTRICITY AND THE FOOD HAS ALSO BEEN CUT OFF.

IS THE GOVERNMENT PLANNING TO ABANDON US?

EVEN THE DOCTORS WHO ARE HELPING THE PATIENTS ARE STARTING TO COLLAPSE ONE BY ONE.

THE HOSPITALS ARE ALREADY FULL OF PATIENTS.

THAT'S ALSO THE SAME ENDING AS *RESIDENT EVIL*, RIGHT?

OOOH! YEAH!

WHAAT?! SHUT UP!

THAT STORY WHERE AN EPIDEMIC STARTED IN AMERICA AND THEY GOT RID OF IT BY FIRING MISSILES INTO THE CITY?!

HEY... WASN'T THERE A MOVIE LIKE THIS?

WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO US?!

WHEEZE

I WONDER IF EVERYONE OUTSIDE IS WAITING FOR US TO DIE FROM THE VIRUS.

.....

HA HA HA ...

THEY WON'T DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT IN THE MIDDLE OF TOKYO.

WAIT! LOOK WHAT'S COMING!

WE'LL BE MASSA-CRED FOR SURE THIS TIME!!

SAVE ME! MOM! DAD!

TO DIE IN A PLACE LIKE THIS...!

...NO WAY!

EIKO?!

EEK!

WE APOLOGIZE FOR TAKING SO LONG!

PEOPLE OF THE CITY!

WE WILL NOW PASS OUT THE VACCINE.

AFTER YOUR IDENTIFICATION IS CHECKED YOU WILL RECEIVE IT.

H5N-1

H5N-1

W-A-H-A-H-H!

WE HAVE FINISHED THE VACCINE FOR THE NEW VIRUS!

THANK YOU, DUSTIN HOFFMAN! ♡

WHO THE HECK IS THAT?

HA HA!

THIS IS GREAT!!

WE'LL BE ABLE TO GO HOME NOW!

EEP!

I'M ABE FROM THE SENATE!!

HURRY AND HAND IT OVER!

CALM DOWN !!

WE HAVE ENOUGH VACCINE.

IN ORDER.

PLEASE LINE UP.

H5N-1

5N-1

FINALLY WE'LL BE ABLE TO HAVE SOME PEACE AND QUIET.

WE'VE LOST A WHOLE WEEK OF BUSINESS.

I WONDER HOW THEY'RE GOING TO PAY ME BACK.

YES.

HAS IT BEEN PASSED OUT TO ALL OF THE TENANTS IN THE BUILDING?

TAIZUU!

THE VACCINE HAS COME.

HE'S BEEN DEPRESSED AND LOCKED HIMSELF UP IN HIS SHOP SINCE THIS BEGAN.

WHAT'S WRONG? WITHDRAWAL FROM LACK OF SWEETS?

KNOCK KNOCK

TAIZUU.

TAIZUU ...

DID YOU ALREADY DRINK THE VACCINE?

HUH?

YEAH.

OH, SO YOU'RE STILL ALIVE, COUNT.

...UGH!

WHAT?!

IT LOOKS LIKE I WAS TOO LATE.

IT LOOKS LIKE THIS IS THE ANSWER FROM THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT.

THAT...

THAT MEDICINE WAS...?!

CHIN?!

!!

ESPECIALLY A "DREAM TOWN" LIKE KABUKI-CHO.

THEY PROBABLY DECIDED IT WAS BETTER TO TAKE IT ALL DOWN COMPLETELY TO BE SAFE.

...THEY DECIDED TO GIVE UP 100,000 PEOPLE.

NO, FOR THE ENTIRE WORLD'S 5,500,000,000 PEOPLE...

FOR THE 120,000,000 PEOPLE OF JAPAN...

TAKE A LOOK, TAIZUU.

THIS IS THE KINGDOM THAT YOU WANTED TO HAVE IN YOUR HANDS.

EVEN SENA-TORS ...

...OR COMMON PEOPLE AND CELEBRITIES ...

TAIZUU, IT'S EXACTLY AS YOU SAY.

THI--

THIS IS...

OH, MY.

IT LOOKS LIKE THE EFFORTS OF THE GOVERN-MENT ARE GOING TO WASTE.

!!

...THERE SEEMS TO BE NO DIFFERENCE IN THE WEIGHT OF THEIR LIVES.

THOSE CHILDREN DO NOT HAVE BOUNDARIES OR GOVERNMENTS.

.....

ZŪU.

TAIZUU.

HUH?

IT'S RARE FOR YOU TO DOZE OFF, TAIZUU.

CHIN ...?!

ARE YOU OKAY?

TAIZUU!

AH!

THEN THAT WAS...

DOZE... OFF?

IT WAS A DREAM.

SIGH

BIRD... INFLUENZA ...?!

SO? WHAT DID YOU NEED ME FOR?

IT SEEMS THAT THERE WAS A PERSON WITH SYMPTOMS OF THE AVIAN FLU AND THEY WOULD LIKE TO DISPOSE OF ALL THE BIRDS FROM RESTAURANTS AND PET SHOPS JUST IN CASE.

OH, YES, I WAS JUST WITH THE PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT A MOMENT AGO.

IT'S JANUARY 13... EXACTLY A WEEK AGO.

JUST WHERE DID THE DREAM BEGIN AND REALITY END?!

THE PUBLIC OFFICERS CAME...

...AND KILLED THE BIRDS!

W-WAIT ...

I'M COMING, TOO.

WELCOME.

...I UNDER-STAND.

PLEASE GO ABOUT FREELY.

THIS IS AN ORDER FROM THE PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT. WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO BRING OUT ALL OF YOUR BIRDS.

COUNT ?!

NO, THAT IS...

ARE THESE ALL OF THEM?

NO MATTER HOW RARE THE BREED...

...WE HAVE TO STOP THE VIRUS FROM SPREAD-ING!!

WE DO NOT MAKE EXCEPTIONS!

I HAVE A CERTAIN BIRD THAT IS NOT FOR SALE THAT I AM HOLDING FOR A CLIENT.

I WONDER IF I SHOULD GIVE THAT TO YOU AS WELL...

IT'S RIGHT OVER HERE.

IT'S ...

IT'S AN AWFULLY LARGE CAGE.

THEN PLEASE COME THIS WAY.

OH, THE OWNER CAN COME, TOO, IF HE'D LIKE.

?!

WHAT'S THIS?! THERE WERE THIS MANY ROOMS IN THE BACK?!

IT'S EVEN CONNECTED TO OTHER FLOORS.

TH--

THIS IS...

...JAPANESE ...IBIS... A JAPANESE IBIS?!

THESE WENT EXTINCT TWO YEARS AGO!

THIS YOUNG LADY IS THE LAST OF HER KIND, BORN AND RAISED IN JAPAN.

HER NAME IS ***NIPPONIA*** NIPPON.

THE JAPANESE CRESTED IBIS.

N-NO. I HEARD THAT THEY WERE TRYING TO BREED THE GENES OF THE JAPANESE IBIS ARTIFICIALLY IN A RESEARCH FACILITY IN CHINA...

...IF YOU'D LIKE, YOU CAN CHECK THE DNA OF THE BIRD BEFORE YOU PUT IT TO SLEEP.

BUT WHY IS A NATIONALLY PRESERVED SPECIES HERE IN THE PET SHOP?!

WELL, WHAT WILL YOU DO?

UGH...

CANA-RIES AND PARROTS ...

SWALLOWS AND CROWS...

EVEN THE JAPANESE CRESTED IBIS IS JUST A BIRD!

THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE IN THEIR WEIGHT OF LIFE.

OH?!

AHH...

AAAH!!

Come to think of it she was feeling a bit sick last week.

SHE MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE SOURCE OF THE VIRUS.

!!

HOW UNFORTU-NATE.

AH!

THIS IS--!!

OH, NO!

WELL...

WHERE DID THAT IBIS GO?!

WH-WHERE DID IT GO?!

.....

THAT IS SOMETHING THAT EVEN I DON'T KNOW.

SHE WILL GO WHEREVER SHE PLEASES.

IN THE SKIES, THERE ARE NO BOUND-ARIES...

...AND THERE IS NO GOVERNMENT.

CHAPTER 8 END

第9話／Dream land

EAT BEFORE IT GETS COLD.

THEN I'M GOING TO PUT IT RIGHT OUT HERE.

SILENCE

.....

MIDORI?

DINNER'S READY... DO YOU WANT TO EAT TOGETHER TODAY?

IT GETS COLD AT NIGHT SO STAY WARM.

WHISPERS DIARY

THIS IS MIMI-TAN THAT I MET AT A PET SHOP IN KABUKI-CHO. I WAS ORIGINALLY LOOKING FOR A BIRD, BUT THE SLIGHTLY STRANGE OWNER TOLD ME THAT THIS CHILD REALLY LIKED ME.
I WAS LIKE, DON'T TRY TO SELL ME SUCH THINGS! BUT WHEN OUR EYES MET, I FELT DESTINY. I'M SO ADDICTED TO MY LITTLE BUNNY MIMI-TAN RIGHT NOW!!

Kabuki-cho First Street

BUT--TODAY IS THE ONLY DAY TO EAT THE SPECIAL DESERTS MADE FOR BOY'S DAY!

WHY DON'T YOU CARRY A CELL PHONE?!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING LEAVING YOUR SHOP DURING, A MONEY MAKING TIME LIKE GOLDEN WEEK?!

I'M EVEN GETTING REQUESTS FROM CUSTOMERS WHO WANT TO SEE YOUR STORE!

You're either in the sweets area of the department store basement, the fruit parlor or the café

HMPH!

IT'S BECAUSE I'VE PRETTY MUCH GOT AN IDEA OF WHERE YOU LIKE TO WALK AROUND.

I'M BAD WITH THOSE KINDS OF MACHINES.

BUT IT TRULY IMPRESSES ME THAT THE GREAT TAIZUU COMES OUT HIMSELF TO PICK ME UP.

WHOA!

HERE!

I HAPPEN TO HAVE A BAG CARRIER WITH ME RIGHT NOW.

I CAN PICK IT UP RIGHT NOW.

YES! IT'S BEAUTIFUL!

OH! COUNT!

IS THIS FLOWER ARRANGEMENT OKAY?

しゃっくしねろ
1本
15円

HOW ARE YOU, RUMI?

...IS THAT A NEW UNIFORM?

IT IS... THE OWNER SUDDENLY DECIDED...

...“MAID CAFÉS ARE POPULAR SO WE'LL DO ONE, TOO!” HE WON'T LISTEN TO REASON.

MAID SHABU SHABU

W-WAIT, YOU!

OOOOH, COUNT! ♡

AH...

HOW AMUSING.

I DON'T THINK AKIHABARA AND KABUKI-CHO CLIENTELE HAVE THE SAME INTERESTS.

They haven't thought of the otaku mentality or done enough research

Agreed

SWEAT

WHAT'S GOING ON?

AREN'T HOSTS SUPPOSED TO BE THE ONES WHO DO THE PAMPERING?

THEY ARE JUST GETTING EXCITED OVER THE COMPETITION BETWEEN THE TWO MOST POPULAR HOST CLUBS IN KABUKI-CHO.

IT'S AN EXHIBITION OF THE TOP HOSTS.

IS IT THE YAKUZA?

WHAT?!

JUST SO YOU KNOW, THAT WAS A MAN.

.....

AND THAT PERSON WITH THE NOSE PIERCING IS A WOMAN.

NOW THAT'S THE KIND OF BEAUTY THAT RULES THE HOSTESS SCENE IN KABUKI-CHO.

OH!

TAIZUU ...

WHAT'S WITH THIS TOWN...?

THERE ARE DIFFERENT KINDS OF MEN AND WOMEN.

THERE ARE JAPANESE AND FOREIGNERS, PURE-BLOODS AND MIXED-BLOODS.

ALL KINDS OF CREATURES LIVE TOGETHER IN THIS CITY.

THIS IS KABUKI-CHO.

A drunk?

WHAT IS WRONG, YOUNG LADY?

ARE YOU NOT FEELING WELL?

Y-YES, A BIT... I THINK I GOT OVERWHELMED BY THE CROWDS OF PEOPLE.

IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE I'VE TRAVELED OUTSIDE...

What kind of a country girl is this?

HM?

UH...

BUSINESS SMILE

WELCOME, YOUNG LADY.

IN NEO CHINATOWN YOU CAN FIND IN ONE BUILDING EVERYTHING FROM CHINESE CUISINE TO...

IT LOOKS LIKE SHE'S A CUSTOMER LOOKING FOR OUR BUILDING.

HM?

OH, MY...

UMM... I ACTUALLY...

I, WOO-FEI RAU, WILL PERSONALLY ESCORT YOU ANYWHERE YOU'D LIKE!

WE EVEN SHOW BANGKOK PLAYS AND CHINESE MOVIES.

OR WOULD YOU LIKE A CHINESE MAKE-OVER?

...CUSTOM-MADE CHINESE DRESSES.

PLEASE WAIT A MOMENT AND HAVE SOME TEA AS WELL.

Y-YES.

I WENT AHEAD AND GAVE HIM A CUP OF TEA.

THE GENTLEMAN OVER THERE SAID THAT HE WOULD NOT GO HOME UNTIL HE SAW THE COUNT...

I SEE.

WELCOME BACK, COUNT AND TAIZUU.

MR. CHAN, THANK YOU FOR WATCHING OVER THE SHOP WHILE I WAS GONE.

JUST LIKE THE RUMORS SAY... NO...

YOU'RE EVEN MORE VISUALLY ASTOUND-ING. ♡

I SEE. I SEE.

YES...

I'M SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING, I AM--

AAAAAH! YOU MUST BE COUNT D?

...

EVEN THOUGH I MIGHT NOT LOOK IT, I OWN A BUSINESS IN ROPPONGI HILLS.

I'VE MADE A BIT OF A NAME FOR MYSELF IN THE I.T. INDUSTRY.

MY STOCK IS GOING UP AGAIN SOON, SO IT'S A GOOD IDEA TO BUY SOME NOW.

AT THIS SHOP WE HAVE EVERYTHING FROM DOGS AND CATS TO--

"THINGS THAT BARELY PASS THE C.I.T.E.S. LIST"... RIGHT?

I JUST DON'T LIKE THE SAME THINGS AS NORMAL PEOPLE.

I WANT SOMETHING UNIQUE, SOMETHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY.

PRICE? OF COURSE YOU CAN ASK WHATEVER PRICE YOU NEED AND I'LL PAY IN CASH.

EVEN THE PROTECTED PANDA SPECIES, ANYTHING IS FINE.

THE FRILL-NECKED LIZARD OR THE PRESERVED GIANT SALAMANDER ...

What is with that man?!

THEN...

...HOW ABOUT THIS BEAUTY HERE?

OH! THAT SOUNDS PERFECT.

I UNDER-STAND.

I WILL BRING OUT A PET THAT IS SUITABLE FOR YOU.

THIS LOOKS LIKE SOMETHING YOU CAN GET IN ANY OLD STORE.

?!

IT IS THE DESCENDENT OF THE EMPRESS SEITAIKOU'S BELOVED GOLDFISH.

THIS GOLDFISH WAS HELD IN THE POND OF THE SHIN DYNASTY PALACE OF CHINA.

A GOLDFISH?!

TH-THIS COMMON GOLDFISH?!

100 MILLION YEN?!

BY THE WAY, THE PRICE IS... 100,000,000 YEN.

OH, YOU SAID YOU WOULD PAY FOR HER IN CASH, RIGHT?

JUST WHAT I EXPECTED OF A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS OWNER! THEN WE SHOULD START THE PAPERS--

UGH...

HUH?

OH MY. THIS IS UNEXPECTED. A HIGH CLASS MAN SUCH AS YOURSELF, I THOUGHT YOU WOULD REALIZE THE VALUE OF THIS PET...

N-NO. O-OF COURSE I KN-KNOW!

WELL, I'LL BE OFF THEN.

I-I'LL BE BACK TO GET IT LATER.

IS THAT SO?

I HAVE TO PREPARE THE RIGHT FISH TANK.

B-BEFORE THAT, FOR A GOLDFISH WORTH 100 MILLION YEN...

TYPICAL! ANOTHER JERK WHO GOT RICH QUICK IN THE I.T. INDUSTRY.

AREN'T YOU PRETTY MUCH THE SAME TYPE OF PERSON ...?

CHIN! SANITIZE THE CHAIR HE WAS SITTING IN.

KU HA HAH! GOOD RIDDANCE.

I...

UH...

UMM...

WELL, THEN.

THANK YOU FOR WAITING, YOUNG LADY.

WHAT KIND OF PET ARE YOU LOOKING FOR...?

嘉木也びら尺

HAH!

YOU'RE A FAILURE AS A BUSINESSMAN IF YOU CHOOSE YOUR CUSTOMERS.

I DON'T NEED BUSINESS ADVICE FROM YOU!

OOH! I WAS JOKING ABOUT THE 100 MILLION.

I DON'T CARE WHAT SPECIES IT IS.

BIRD OR DOG... EVEN A GOLDFISH.

...BUT...

I'M, WELL... I'M LIKE THAT OTHER GUY... I THINK.

I WANT TO BUY SOMETHING THAT'S ONLY FOR ME IN THE WHOLE WORLD!

I JUST WANT TO BE ABLE TO FEEL LIKE "THIS IS THE ONE!" WHEN I SEE IT...

THEY WERE... VERY CUTE.

BUT SOME-THING WAS OFF...

I FELT LIKE SOMETHING WAS MISSING.

UP UNTIL NOW, MY PARENTS HAVE BOUGHT ME PUREBRED CATS AND BEAUTIFUL BIRDS.

I HAVE NO FRIENDS, EITHER.

I WOULD ACTUALLY RATHER LOOK FOR IT MYSELF.

AS FOR THE PRICE, I DON'T CARE IF IT'S EXPENSIVE OR CHEAP.

I DON'T CARE IF IT'S A STRAY DOG OR A THROWN AWAY CAT.

BUT I...DON'T GO OUT OF MY H-HOUSE OFTEN.

BUT WHEN I WAS LOOKING AT THE PET FORUMS ON THE NET...

I THOUGHT THE SHOP OWNER WAS JOKING, BUT THE SNAKE I GOT COMPLETELY CHANGED! SO SURPRISED! IT WAS HOW WE ME... PERFUL PET SHOP OW...

AND, I DON'T KNOW... SOMETHING TOLD ME THAT...

...I COULD FIND MY DESTINED PET...OR SOMETHING.

FEEL LIKE MY LIFE S BEEN COMPLETELY NEWED AFTER NG WITH COOKIE. E NEVER WOKEN UP ARLY BEFORE, BUT OW COOKIE WAKES ME UP SAYING "LET'S O ON A WALK" AND KE HIM. (LOL) VE REGAINED MY TE FOR LIFE E OF HIM

THIS IS MIMI-TAN THAT I MET AT A PET SHOP IN KABUKI-CHO I WAS ORIGINALLY LOOKING FOR A BIRD, BUT THE PECULIAR OWNER TOLD ME THAT THIS PET REALLY LIKED ME. I WAS LIKE, DON'T TRY TO SELL ME SOMETHING I DON'T WANT! BUT WHEN OUR EYES MET, I FELT DESTINY. I LOVE MY LITTLE BUNNY MIMI-TAN!!

I READ BLOGS THAT RAVED ABOUT THE PETS THAT WERE PURCHASED HERE.

O-CHAN'S EMBARRASSING DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT FERRETS AND NOW THIS PET IS M IF I DIDN'T GO TO THAT PET SHOP COULDN'T HAVE BEEN MORE HAPPY! I FELT THAT SUC

REALLY?!

I UNDER-STAND.

I WILL PREPARE A PET THAT IS PERFECT FOR YOU, YOUNG LADY.

I WILL BE SURE TO FIND YOUR PERFECT LIFE PARTNER.

CAN I HAVE A LITTLE BIT OF TIME?

.....

...HUH?

BUT THE RIGHT ONE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE IN THIS SHOP TODAY.

NO MATTER WHAT!

YES, OF COURSE.

CONTACT ME, NO MATTER WHAT.

YES.

TH-THEN HERE IS MY HOME ADDRESS.

THE PETS HAVE A RIGHT TO CHOOSE A COMPATIBLE PARTNER AS WELL.

WHY WOULD YOU BOTHER WITH SUCH A GEEKY AND SPOILED RECLUSE LIKE HER?

HMPH.

YOU SHOULD HAVE JUST GOTTEN A RANDOM CAT OR DOG FOR HER AND SENT HER ON HER WAY.

LOVERS?!

HAH! THEN FOR THAT LITTLE GIRL...

...WOULDN'T IT BE FASTER TO GET ON A SINGLES WEBSITE TO FIND A MATCH?

ANIMALS AND HUMANS ARE...

...FRIENDS, FAMILY, AND SOMETIMES EVEN LOVERS...

I WILL SET UP THE PERFECT MEETING WITH HER PERFECT "PRINCE"!!

DEFINITELY!!

THEN, I'LL DO THAT.

So motivated

HUH?!

That's your type of woman!

MIDORI?!

DID ANY STRANGE PEOPLE TRY TO TALK TO YOU?

DID YOU HAVE ANY SEIZURES?

IF YOU HAD JUST TOLD ME, I WOULD HAVE GOTTEN THE CAR FOR YOU...

WHERE WERE YOU?!

STOMP

STOMP

I WENT SHOPPING FOR A BIT.

KA-CHUNK

LEAVE ME ALONE!!!

MIDORI?!

SHUT UP!

I'M NOT A LITTLE CHILD ANYMORE!

...S-SORRY.

I'M A BIT TIRED...

I'M GOING TO TAKE A BATH BEFORE DINNER...

6

PHEEW

R-REALLY?!

THEN I'LL MAKE DINNER A BIT LATER.

I GUESS IT CAN'T BE HELPED THAT MOM AND DAD ARE SO WORRIED.

WHEN I WAS SEVEN YEARS OLD, IT **SEEMS** I HAD A NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCE.

60

SHHHH

MIDORI!!

I DIDN'T EVEN REMEMBER MY OWN NAME.

MIDORI?!

DO YOU RECOG-NIZE ME?! IT'S DAD!

I DIDN'T EVEN RECOGNIZE THEIR FACES...

MIDORI!!

THE CONCERNED FACES OF MY PARENTS PEERING INTO MINE...

WHEN I CAME TO, I WAS IN THE HOSPITAL.

MY PARENTS HAD ME AFTER YEARS OF TRYING. AND BECAUSE OF THAT...

...THEY CARED FOR ME VERY MUCH.

I GUESS I HAD BEEN UNCONSCIOUS FOR MANY DAYS AFTER FALLING OUT OF A BOAT AND ALMOST DROWNING.

THE DOCTORS SAY I LOST MY MEMORY FROM THE SHOCK OF THE ACCIDENT.

EVEN AT SCHOOL...

...MY PARENTS ASKED TO NOT HAVE ME PARTICIPATE IN SWIMMING CLASSES.

AND WE EVEN MOVED BECAUSE OF THAT.

SINCE THEN, I HAVEN'T GONE NEAR ANY OCEANS OR RIVERS.

I WASN'T ABLE TO BECOME A PART OF MY NEW SCHOOL AND...

...I BECAME AN OUTCAST...

...AND I WAS SUDDENLY TRANS-FERRED TO ANOTHER SCHOOL.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO TO A SCHOOL LIKE THAT!!

BECAUSE OF THAT, I WAS TEASED BY MY CLASSMATES...

IN THE END...

DAD'LL HOME TUTOR YOU.

YOU CAN STAY AT HOME, FOREVER.

I STILL HAVEN'T GONE BACK TO SCHOOL...

AND NOW IT'S BEEN 10 YEARS.

A JOB?!

WE DON'T HAVE PROBLEM WITH MONEY, EVEN IF YOU DON'T WORK.

IF YOU WANT TO STUDY MORE, WE'LL GET A HOME TUTOR FOR YOU.

CHILDREN THE SAME AGE AS ME ARE GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL.

OKAY, MIDORI?

SO YOU SHOULDN'T GO OUTSIDE ON YOUR OWN.

IF YOU WANT ANYTHING, I'LL BUY IT FOR YOU.

IF THIS KEEPS ON...

...I'M GOING TO GO CRAZY!

Puhah!

NOW I FEEL LIKE I'M IN A PRISON!!

I CAN'T BREATHE...!!

I KNOW THAT I CAN'T KEEP ON LIKE THIS!!

THE CHINESE MAN AT THE PET SHOP TODAY...

I COULD SPEAK WITH HIM EASILY...

OH... BUT...

MY SKIN IS UNNATURALLY WHITE.

GOING OUT INTO CROWDS...

TALKING TO STRANGERS...

I WONDER WHY...

LATELY, EVERYTHING FEELS UNCOMFORTABLE.

IT'S ALMOST MIDORI'S BIRTHDAY.

I WONDER WHAT KIND OF PRESENT WE SHOULD GIVE HER.

SHE'S GOING TO BE 18 YEARS OLD.

IT'S BEEN 10 YEARS SINCE *THEN*.

YES...

"THEN"? THAT MUST BE THE DAY I ALMOST DROWNED.

10 YEARS, HUH.

ANYWAY, UNTIL SHE BECOMES AN ADULT...

...DON'T LET HER NEAR ANY WATER.

HUH?

THE STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS WAS UP THREE YEARS AGO.

NO, WE STILL MUST BE CAREFUL.

YES, I UNDER-STAND.

AND DON'T LET HER OUT ON THE FULL MOON, NO MATTER WHAT.

AS IN... A CRIME?!

STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS?! WHAT DID THEY MEAN?!

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

THIS IS MOM AND DAD.

HERE, MIDORI.

THE PERSON IN THE MIDDLE IS YOU.

THIS IS DURING YOUR SPORTS FESTIVAL

THIS IS YOUR SEVENTH BIRTHDAY.

HAH

...SOMETHING IS WRONG.

(HUFF)

SINCE I WAS A CHILD AT THE TIME...

...I BELIEVED THEM.

BUT...

1993 Elementary School Entrance Ceremony

AND THIS IS YOUR ENTRANCE TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

THIS IS ME?

THAT'S RIGHT. THERE'S NO MISTAKE.

YOU'RE MOM AND DAD'S CHILD.

ALBUM

DIDN'T THEY LOOK OLDER?!

THE ENTRANCE CEREMONY WAS IN APRIL AND ONLY A MONTH SHOULD HAVE PASSED SINCE THE ACCIDENT DURING GOLDEN WEEK.

PLUS, THE MOM AND DAD I SAW IN THE HOSPITAL...

HUFF

IT...IT HURTS--

HUFF

IT...CAN'T BE--

1993: Elementary School Entrance Ceremony

HRH

MY HEAD... HURTS...

I CAN'T...

I CAN'T REMEMBER!!

Umazon.
Umazon.
I'M ALSO LEAVING SOME PACKAGES AND YOUR MAIL.
MIDORI?
ARE YOU AWAKE? I'M GOING TO LEAVE YOUR LUNCH HERE.
IT'S FROM THE PET SHOP!!
Thank you for waiting. I have finally found a pet that is perfect for you. If possible, please come by the pet shop tomorrow evening.
—From the Store Owner
TOMORROW!!

WELCOME, YOUNG LADY.

PLEASE LET ME SEE IT!

PLEASE COME THIS WAY.

WH-WHAT KIND OF PET IS IT? A CAT?! A DOG?!

OR IS IT A REPTILE?!

IT IS WAITING IN A DIFFERENT ROOM.

MIDORI?!

P-PLEASE CALM DOWN.

HEY, MIDORI! WHERE ARE YOU?!

MIDORI?!

HE'S PROBABLY IN ONE OF THE DEEPER ROOMS.

WHERE IS THE OWNER?!

W-WELL, I DON'T KNOW--

THE ADDRESS ON ONE OF THE SUSPICIOUS ENVELOPES WAS FROM KABUKI-CHO, SO...

...WE FOLLOWED HER HERE.

WHERE IS THE LABYRINTH-LIKE BASEMENT?!

A DEAD END?!

?!

ARE THEY ORPHANS?!

WH-WHAT?! THESE CHILDREN...

A CUSTOMER CAME!

IT'S A CUSTOMER!

HELLO, COUNT!

IT'S THE COUNT!

HUH?!

AH!

THEY HAVE SUCH COLORFUL CLOTHES ON...

PLEASE LET US THROUGH.

NOW, NOW. TODAY WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO PLAY WITH YOU.

THE SHOP'S STAFF...ARE MORE LIKE, HOSTESSES?

WAS THIS NEO CHINATOWN CONNECTED TO OTHER STORES?

IT IS A PRETTY DARKLY LIT SHOP...

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN.

?!

IT LOOKS LIKE YOU HAVE A CUTE YOUNG LADY WITH YOU TODAY.

HEY, COUNT!

AHA HA HA! JUST KIDDING!

See you later!

NOW, NOW!

LOOKS DELI-CIOUS.

I SHOULD BE IN KABUKI-CHO.

I CANT SEE ANY NEON LIGHTS...

B-BUT... WHERE IS THIS?!

LIKE I SAID, WE ARE HEADING TO WHERE YOUR PET IS.

WH-WHEN DID WE LEAVE THE BUILDING?!

WEAR THIS.

OH...

ON TOP OF THAT IT'S GOTTEN VERY COLD.

.....

PLEASE WATCH YOUR STEP.

IS THAT GIRL WITH YOU A "CUSTOMER"?

OR IS IT A NEW...?

FOR THE COUNT TO COME THIS FAR...

IT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME.

OH, HOW RARE.

.....

IT'S JUST A BIT FURTHER.

DO NOT WORRY.

...THE PET OF YOUR WISHES IS WAITING.

YOUR DESTINED PARTNER...

YOUNG LADY?

...GOING TO BE SOLD SOME-WHERE?!

COULD IT BE THAT I'M...

B-BUT--

WELL...

THAT I DO NOT KNOW YET.

P-PET?

WHAT EXACTLY IS IT?!

THAT LITTLE PIECE OF YOUR SOUL.

...TRULY DESIRE.

...OR YOUR REAL PARENTS.

...FROM THE DEEPNESS OF YOUR HEART...

SOME-THING THAT YOU...

WHETHER THAT IS A FRIEND...

...OR A LOVER...

THAT MEANS...

LIKE I THOUGHT...

MY REAL PARENTS?!

THOSE PEOPLE ARE NOT MY REAL PARENTS?!

NO WONDER IT WAS SO COLD.

BUT ISN'T IT MAY RIGHT NOW?!

SNOW?

...HUH?

WE'VE FINALLY ARRIVED.

OH...

LOOK, RIGHT THERE.

WHO...
ARE...YOU?

LOOKS...
JUST LIKE
ME AS A
CHILD?!

LIAR!!

WHAT?!

A BETTER QUESTION IS, WHO ARE YOU?

I'M... MIDORI... MIDORI MIZUSAWA.

HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN?

EVEN ABOUT US?

I'M THE REAL--

I'M THE REAL MIDORI.

WHA--

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

I'M--

WE'VE COME TO PICK YOU UP, OUR BELOVED DAUGHTER..

IT'S ALL RIGHT NOW...

YOU CAN GO BACK TO YOUR HOME.

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DID UNTIL NOW.

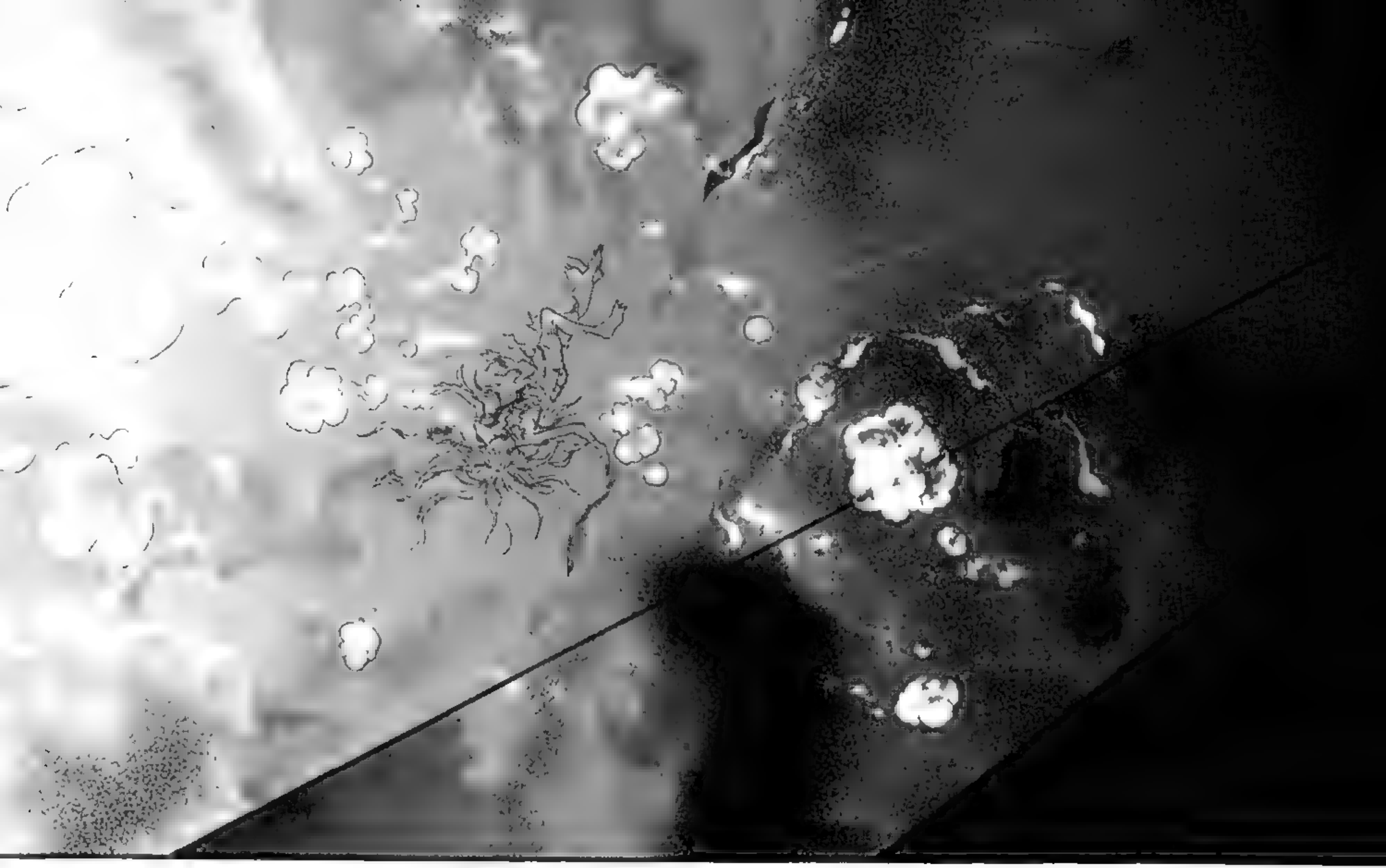
?!

HUH?

I'M UNDER-WATER?!

MY BODY--

I'M... DROWNING.



...RI.

MIDORI
...

YES.

AND...I REMEMBER NOW.

EVERY-THING.

YOU'VE AWAKENED.

COUNT.

PLEASE CALM DOWN.

MIDORI! WHERE ARE YOU?!

MIDORI, ANSWER US--

ON THAT DAY, TOO.

THE TWO OF THEM WERE CALLING THEIR DAUGHTER'S NAME ON THE BEACH.

...THE LITTLE GIRL'S EMPTY SHELL FELL DOWN TO US.

WITH WHAT LOOKED LIKE SNOW IN THE SEA...

ON THE NIGHT OF THE FULL MOON.

THOSE VOICES SOUNDED SO LOVELY...

AND SO SORROWFUL.

AND SO YOU PRAYED TO THE MOON?

TO "PLEASE GRANT THE WISHES OF THESE PEOPLE"?

AFTER THAT, EVERYDAY...

..FOR YEARS...

...THE COUPLE, EVERY DAY AND EVERY NIGHT...

...CONTINUED TO CALL FOR THEIR DAUGHTER.

AND LOST MY MEMORY UNTIL THEN.

I HAD LOST MY CONSCIOUSNESS DUE TO THE CHANGES IN MY BODY.

YES... BUT WHEN I ROSE ABOVE THE WATERS.

THEY WERE ALWAYS AFRAID.

THINKING SOMEDAY, MY REAL PARENTS WOULD APPEAR TO CLAIM ME.

THINKING THAT SOMEDAY MY MEMORIES WOULD RETURN AND THEY WOULD LOSE ME.

THAT MY FACE ONLY HAPPENED TO BE SIMILAR.

AND THAT I WAS STILL DIFFERENT FROM THEIR DAUGHTER WHO WAS LOST AT SEA THREE YEARS BEFORE...

THEY WERE HAPPY THAT THEIR CHILD "MIRACULOUSLY" CAME BACK TO THEM, BUT...

...IN REALITY, THEY KNEW THE TRUTH.

THEY SEEMED JUST LIKE THE MOTHER AND FATHER IN THE TALE OF THE PRINCESS KAGUYA.

I BELIEVE THEY ARE REACHING THE POINT WHERE THEY CAN ACCEPT THEIR OWN DAUGHTER'S "DEATH."

WILL YOU GO BACK TO YOUR HOMELAND WITH YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

.....

OH, MY.

WHAT IS GOING ON?

COUNT?!

WHERE WERE YOU UNTIL N--

OUR DAUGHTER! WHERE DID YOU PUT MIDORI?!

ARE YOU THE SHOP OWNER?!

MIDORI?!

JEEEEEEZ. WHAT ARE YOU TWO DOING HERE?

What a troublesome family.

PLEASE WORK OUT THE PAYMENT DETAILS, FATHER.

OH, YES. I'VE DECIDED ON WHAT I WANT FOR A PRESENT THIS YEAR.

MY GOODNESS, YOU'RE MAKING SUCH A BIG DEAL!

IT'S EMBARRASSING, PLEASE STOP IT.

A-ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!

THE PET HIMSELF ISN'T VERY EXPENSIVE, BUT...

...THE WATER FOR HIM IS A BIT PRICEY.

YAY!

YES!! OF COURSE!!

S-SURE!

...HUH?

RIGHT, COUNT? ♡

HEY, COUNT...

YOU SAID THAT PETS AND HUMANS CAN BE A PART OF A FAMILY, RIGHT?

THAT IS CORRECT.

THEN, I WILL...

...BE LIKE THIS JUST A LITTLE BIT LONGER.

AT LEAST UNTIL THEY PASS AWAY.

What do you think? Pretty handsome, isn't he?

HEEEY!

HE WILL PROBABLY BE ABLE TO PUSH THE LONELINESS OF BEING IN ANOTHER WORLD AWAY.

THEN, PLEASE TAKE ONE OF YOUR FRIENDS WITH YOU.

SO?

THIS IS THE *PRINCE* YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT?

.....

CHAPTER 9 END

店物寵

HEL-
LOOO!

SO WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE TODAY?

YOU LOOK VERY WELL, COUNT.

OH MY, THIS IS...

IT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME, YOUR HIGHNESS.

I'M GOING TO WORK PART-TIME FOR YOU!

WELL, I HAVE GOOD NEWS.

第10話／Dalsegno

...HE GOT UPSET ABOUT BEING LEFT BEHIND...

THAT MAN DOES NOT CHANGE AT ALL...

YES, SO MR. TOKIWA IS GOING TO BE GONE FOR THE NEXT FOUR OR FIVE DAYS DOING HIS "OTHER" JOB.

I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE TAKING CARE OF HIM, BUT...

I UNDERSTAND. WE'LL TAKE CARE OF THE PHARAOH AT THE SHOP SO PLEASE DON'T WORRY.

IT'S BECAUSE HE TRIES TO LIE ABOUT WHAT HE'S DOING.

YES, WELL, TALK TO YOU LATER.

ｳﾘｭｳｷｷｷ

OH. A CUSTOMER?

PHA... ERR, FEMTO.

THAT IS THE OWNER OF NEO CHINATOWN.

OWNER?!

WHO IS THIS BRAT?!

THANK YOU FOR COMING.

I AM FEMTO. AS OF TODAY I WORK AT THIS SHOP.

OH! HE'S LIKE THE LANDLORD OF AN APARTMENT.

DON'T BE SHY... COME IN... BUY A PET.

AH!

ARE YOU TRYING TO SELL HIM TO HOMOSEXUAL PEDOPHILES--?

HOW RUDE!

YOUR IMAGINA-TION IS MUCH MORE OF A CRIME!

TO MAKE SUCH A YOUNG CHILD WORK...

A WORKER?

THAT'S AGAINST CHILD LABOR LAWS.

I DO NOT WISH TO RETURN TO TOKIWA'S HOME!

HE TELLS ME THAT DESSERTS ARE FRIVOLOUS AND ONLY ALLOWS ME TO EAT IT ONCE EVERY TWO DAYS.

I WOULD LIKE TO BE KEPT IN A HUMAN HOUSE THAT IS RICHER AND FULL OF LOVE.

LATELY IT HAS BEEN GETTING HOTTER SO HE KICKS ME OUT OF THE BED TO HAVE IT FOR HIMSELF.

I'M JUST WATCHING HIM FOR FOUR OR FIVE DAYS FOR AN ACQUAINTANCE.

THIS YOUNG MAN IS FROM ANCIENT EGYPT, THE PHA... I MEAN...

COUNT?!

WHAT DID YOU SAY?!

NOW, NOW.

I DON'T KNOW IF HE'S ROYALTY OR WHAT, BUT HE NEEDS TO LEARN TO RESPECT HIS SUPERIORS.

THE BOTH OF YOU...

BESIDES, THAT CHAIR IS RESERVED FOR ME!!

...THE HEIR TO A GREAT FORTUNE.

TAIZUU, THIS CHILD COULD BE FROM A MID-EASTERN ARISTOCRATIC FAMILY OR...

ボ〜!

Grr!

URGH... AM I GETTING IN THE WAY OF BUSINESS?!

AM I TOO MUCH TROUBLE HERE?!

FEMTO?!

Are you seriously running a business?!

TODAY I HAVE SOME VERY GOOD SNACKS.

THAT'S RIGHT! LET'S HAVE TEA.

I KEEP TELLING YOU NOT TO CLOSE THE STORE LIKE THAT!

ON BREAK

Oh no—

IS THIS FORM BETTER FOR THE CUSTOMERS?

This is popular with the females.

PON-CHAN, TECCHAN, PLEASE TAKE FEMTO INTO THE BACK.

GOT IT.

N-NO! HE CHANGED INTO A CAT!

THE CH-CHILD DISAP-PEARED!!

N-NO, WE DO NOT. THAT WAS, Y-YOU KNOW, MAGIC!! IT WAS AN ILLUSION!

COUNT! YOU EVEN SELL DEMON CATS IN THIS SHOP?!

WE DON'T SHOW OUR HUMAN FORM TO ANYONE EXCEPT THE "CHOSEN CUSTOMERS" OF THE COUNT.

OH? I SEE. I APOLOGIZE.

YOU CAN'T DO THAT, YOUR HIGHNESS! WE'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO CHANGE SHAPE IN FRONT OF HUMANS.

IT WOULD BE BAD IF HE FOUND OUT ABOUT OUR OTHER WORK.

THAT OLD MAN IS TRYING TO GET THE COUNT PUSHED OUT OF THE BUILDING.

BOTH HERE AND THERE... THIS WORLD IS A HARD PLACE TO LIVE.

Scottish Fold

LONG TIME NO SEE, YOUR HIGHNESS.

OH, WELCOME, YOUR HIGHNESS.

American Shorthair

Persian

Bombay

HOW YOU BEEN?

HELLO, EVERYONE.

These B

YOUR HIGHNESS, I HOPE YOU ARE WELL.

Russian Blue

Maine Coon

Norwegian F

Sphynx

SPHYNX...

THERE IS A SPHYNX HERE?!

IS THERE NO ONE IN THIS ROOM?

HUH?

Sphynx

HM?

OH? IT'S A BIT DARK IN HERE.

THEN I SHALL VISIT HIM.

OH! YOUR HIGHNESS!

NO, IT'S JUST THAT HE HAS SOME ISSUES...

OH, HE'S NO GOOD.

WHAT, IS HE SICK?!

I'M NOT PRETENDING ANYTHING!

OH, SO YOU *ARE* PRETENDING TO SLEEP.

HEY. HEY?!

ARE YOU SLEEPING?!

HOW ARE YOU FEELING?

OH! HERE HE IS.

AH! STOP...!

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, LET ME SEE YOUR FACE.

ゆさゆさ

BE QUIET.

.....

WHOA!

BALD!!

YOU LOOK JUST LIKE AN ALIEN FROM A HORROR MOVIE.

DON'T CALL ME BALD!!

ARGH-- HE'S TOTALLY SAYING ALL THE WRONG THINGS!

FOR ONE AS YOURSELF WHO HAS BEEN "LIVING" SINCE ANCIENT TIMES, HE IS A VERY DISTANT ANCESTOR.

THIS IS A SPHYNX NAMED AMON.

HIS KIND ACTUALLY ORIGINATED 40 YEARS AGO IN CANADA, NOT EGYPT.

COUNT...

ANCIENT TIMES?!

YES, HE IS THE CAT FEMTO THAT WAS OWNED BY THE PHARAOH IN ANCIENT EGYPT.

IN OTHER WORDS, HE IS ONE OF THE ANCESTORS OF THE PET CATS THAT ARE NOW ALL AROUND THE WORLD.

Please read the details in the Reisha manga series

...A LOT OF THINGS HAPPENED SINCE THEN. HE HAS BEEN REVIVED AND IS IN POSSESSION OF THE PHARAOH'S SOUL.

WHEN THE PHARAOH DIED, HE WAS TURNED INTO A MUMMY WITH HIM, BUT...

YOU LOOK A LOT BETTER THAN ME.

AND YOU HAVE HAIR.

I'M JUST...

EVEN... EVEN STILL.

SO BASICALLY, I'M LIKE A MONSTER.

HAHA

.....

HE LOOKS LIKE AN ALIEN!

A BALDY! A BALDY!

THAT CAT IS CREEPY!

EWWW!

TO HUMANS, I'M JUST A RARE AND EXPENSIVE TYPE OF CAT.

THEY JUST WANT TO USE ME AS A TOOL TO BOAST ABOUT THEMSELVES.

BUT THERE IS SURE TO BE A PARTNER OUT THERE WHO WILL SEE YOUR CHARMING POINTS.

THAT'S A LIE!!

THAT WAS ONLY BECAUSE THEY WEREN'T COMPAT-IBLE WITH YOU.

I GUESS YOU COULD SAY THAT.

SUDDEN MUTATION... IS THAT A SICKNESS?

RARE?!

SINCE THEY ARE HAIRLESS, THEIR SKIN RECEIVES DIRECT SUNLIGHT, WHICH MAKES THEM WEAK AND SUSCEPTIBLE TO DISEASE.

HIS SPECIES IS ORIGINALLY FROM A SINGLE MALE CAT THAT SUDDENLY HAD A MUTATION FOR NO HAIR.

THEY ARE SIMILAR TO A LOT OF THE CATS HERE.

IF THAT HAPPENED IN NATURE, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO REACH ADULTHOOD.

LIKE THE FOLDED-EAR SCOTTISH FOLD OR THE ROUGHLY FURRED DEVON REX, ETC.

BUT THEY USED THAT SINGLE CAT TO REPRODUCE MANY...

THE JAPANESE SHORT HAIR IS THE RESULT OF HUMANS BREEDING CATS FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS FOR TRAITS THEY FOUND FAVORABLE.

AND FINALLY THEY WERE ABLE TO MAKE A BREED THAT HAS SETTLED WITH THAT TRAIT.

I DIDN'T WANT TO BE BORN LIKE THIS!!

I DIDN'T HAVE TO BE PUREBRED, EVEN A STRAY CAT WOULD HAVE BEEN FINE.

I WANTED TO LIVE LIKE A NORMAL CAT!!

IN THE END, IT'S JUST HUMAN EGO!

I WAS SO JEALOUS OF HIM.

HE WAS FLUFFY AND HIS HAIR WAS BEAUTIFUL...

BUT... HE--

THERE WAS A CAT THAT HAD HAIR WHEN I LIVED WITH THE HUMAN BREEDERS.

IN THE END, HE DISAPPEARED BEFORE WE KNEW IT.

THE MORE HIDEOUS WE LOOK, THE BETTER HUMANS LIKE US.

NO WAY! THIS ONE ISN'T HAIRLESS!

IT CAN'T BE SOLD AS A SPHYNX!

I WILL NOT SEND YOU TO A TYPE OF HUMAN THAT YOU HATE.

IT'S ALL RIGHT.

BECAUSE OF THAT, THEY TAKE BROTHERS, AND EVEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN...

...AND FORCE THEM INTO MARRIAGE TO GET THEM TO MAKE BABIES.

YOU CAN STAY HERE UNTIL YOU MEET YOUR DESTINED PARTNER SOMEDAY.

AT OUR HOUSE, WE HAVE A MEETING OF PUREBREDS AND STRAY CATS ONCE EVERY MONTH.

FE-FEMTO?!

THEN WE SHOULD GO HIT ON SOME WOMEN!!

WELL, IT'S LIKE A MATCH-MAKING MEETING. MATCH-MAKING!!

I'VE GOT IT! YOU WOULD LIKE TO HAVE FREE LOVE INSTEAD OF POLITICAL MARRIAGE!

HUH?!

EH?!

NOT ONLY HUMANS, OTHER CATS, TOO...

THEY ALL REACT THE SAME WAY WHEN THEY MEET ME.

N--

NO WAY.

YOU CAN HAVE A ONE NIGHT STAND WITHOUT WORRYING ABOUT THE STATUS OF THE OTHER CAT!

Do you understand what you're saying?!

DON'T TOUCH MY KITTENS!

YOU LOOK DISGUSTING.

KYAAH! WHAT ARE YOU?!

ARE YOU REALLY A CAT?!

.....

BUT IF YOU REMAIN A RECLUSE HERE, YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO MARRY!

BUT...

Takiwa was also lamenting that there were a lot of students like that!

I CANNOT SAY FOR SURE THAT SOMETHING LIKE THAT WOULD NOT HAPPEN!!

Don't boast about it!

ARE YOU GOING OUT, COUNT?

YAY! A PICNIC, A PICNIC!

WHAT ABOUT THE SHOP?

OH! I SHOULD TAKE THIS WITH ME AS WELL.

UMM ...

THIS AND THAT...

I CAN'T GO OUTSIDE.

THE SUNLIGHT WILL HURT MY SKIN.

HUH?

BUT, I...

IF YOU SEE TAIZUU, DEAL WITH HIM SOMEHOW.

NO. NO. YOU ALL MUST STAY AND WATCH THE HOUSE.

WHAAAT?

?

IT'S ALL RIGHT. IT'S NOT LIKE WE'LL BE LEAVING THIS PET SHOP.

YES!!

NOW, LET'S GO, AMON.

HUH?

IT DOESN'T MATTER WHERE IT IS.

SOMEWHERE YOU'D LIKE TO PLAY OR SOMEWHERE YOU HAVE MEMORIES OF.

A PLACE WHERE THERE IS SOMEONE YOU'D LIKE TO MEET.

THEN, PHARAOH ...

IMAGINE THE KIND OF PLACE YOU WOULD LIKE TO GO TO.

A PLACE I WANT TO GO...?

THE AMUSEMENT PARK...? THE ZOO?

THE SEA THAT I WENT TO DURING SUMMER BREAK...

THE SKI TRIP...

THE MIDDLE OF OUR SCHOOL FESTIVAL...OR...

WHEN DID WE GET OUTSIDE?!

HUH?!

AND THIS IS...

...EGYPT!!

SO THE PLACE YOU WANTED TO COME MOST WAS HERE.

GOODNESS, GOODNESS.

OH, MY. I SEE, I SEE.

COUNT. AMON.

LOOK! THAT IS OUR SPHINX.

THIS IS THE GUARDIAN CREATURE OF OUR COUNTRY.

I WANTED TO SHOW YOU!

THIS IS MY HOMELAND.

HOW MAGNIFICENT...

HEEEY.

HEEEY, WHERE DID YOU GO?

FEMTO?!

FEMTO!!

HUH?! THAT IS--

THE ONE WHERE HE RETURNS TO HIS HOMELAND AND MEETS HIS MASTER AGAIN.

THIS IS ALSO FEMTO THE CAT'S DREAM.

OH, THAT'S RIGHT.

Heeeey!

THAT'S ME!! WHY?!

HM?!

WHO ARE YOU?

I AM A TRAVELER.

I BEG FOR FORGIVENESS, ENTERING YOUR LANDS UNKNOWINGLY.

...I JUST NEED TO BE IN THIS FORM WHEN I SEE MYSELF, RIGHT?

I DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND, BUT...

FEMTO!

MOOOOW

MY NAME IS D.

YES. I HAVE COME FROM A VERY DISTANT EASTERN COUNTRY.

WHAT STRANGE CLOTHING. IS THAT OF YOUR COUNTRY?

I AM MYSELF, AFTER ALL.

SORRY!!

OH, YOU ARE FEMTO'S FRIEND.

...WHAT IS THAT BALD CREATURE?

SO...

YES! WELCOME.

RUSTLE

AH!

IS THIS YOUR CAT? WHAT IS ITS NAME?

YES, YOUR HIGHNESS--

DO NOT FEAR.

I WILL DEFEAT IT.

...I WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF HUNTING.

I WAS SEPARATED FROM MY GROUP WHILE LOOKING FOR FEMTO.

PLEASE WAIT A MOMENT!

WE WILL NOT HURT YOU.

DO NOT BE AFRAID.

ゴゴゴ

……

HUH?

H-HEY. YOU!

IT'S DANGER-OUS!

IT'S ALL RIGHT.

ゴロゴロ

WOW!

IT IS THANKS TO THE PROTECTION OF THIS HOLY SPHINX.

THIS CREATURE WOULD LIKE TO PLEDGE ITS ALLEGIANCE TO YOU.

I'm so stupid.

I SEE! SO YOU ARE THE TRANSFORMATION OF A GOD!!

TO BE ABLE TO CALM A WILD LION LIKE THAT.

YOU ARE AMAZING!!

Where are you, Your Highness?

Pharaoh!

YOUR HIGHNESS, ARE YOU HURT?!

THE LION THAT WE WERE HUNTING!

AAAH!

HEY! OVER HERE!

Y-- YES!

FIX HIS WOUNDS.

I WILL CARE FOR HIM AT OUR CASTLE.

NOT AT ALL.

I MEAN, THAT SKIN-COLORED CREATURE IS...?

THAT BAL--

B-BY THE WAY...

AND WE ALSO HAVE GUESTS. PREPARE FOR TRAVEL.

YES, SIRE.

IT IS A CAT GOD.

THIS CAT IS THE MANIFEST-AION OF THE SPHINX.

YES, SIRE!

BE SURE TO CARE FOR HIM WELL.

SEKHMET'S --?

GOD...?

IT IS SAID IN THIS COUNTRY THAT THE PHARAOH IS THE MANIFESTATION OF A GOD.

UNTIL MY FATHER'S DEATH, MY HAIR WAS CUT SO I WAS BALD.

Only a bit of the right side is left unshaved

I...I AM A CAT GOD?!

YOU ARE NOW THE MOST HONORED CAT IN MY COUNTRY.

YOU SHOULD STAND PROUD.

MOOM

IF YOU ARE HERE, THAT MUST MEAN MY MOTHER IS ALSO PRESENT!!

BASTET!

UNDER-STOOD.

SEE YOU LATER.

THIS IS PERFECT, ONE CALLED D.

YOU SHOULD TELL US YOUR TALES OF TRAVEL DURING DINNER WITH MY MOTHER.

THEY ARE GETTING MARRIED?

FIANCÉE ...

THAT IS SOMETHING THAT MY MOTHER DECIDED.

OH! I JUST REMEMBERED.

AL-THOUGH SHE IS OLDER.

SHE IS ALSO FEMTO'S FIANCÉE.

THE CAT JUST NOW?

SHE NORMALLY LIVES IN A DIFFERENT CASTLE ABOVE THE NILE.

THAT WAS MY MOTHER'S CAT.

DIED...

WHY DID YOU DIE?!

WHY?! WHEN?!

WELL, WE DIED BEFORE WE REACHED ADULTHOOD.

IT WAS AN UNREALIZED DREAM...

YOU...WERE KILLED?

AS I WAS GOING ON THE PATH TO THE PALACE...

LET'S SEE... IT WAS PROBABLY TODAY OR TOMORROW.

COME TO THINK OF IT, THAT TIME...

...WAS THE MOST EXCITING AND FUN MOMENT OF MY LIFE.

...I WAS STABBED BY AN ASSASSIN.

IT WAS THE DAY MY MOTHER CAME TO THE MAIN PALACE TO CELEBRATE MY 14TH BIRTHDAY...

THIS IS A CLOSED WORLD WHERE ONLY THE BEAUTIFUL MEMORIES REMAIN.

IT'S ALL RIGHT.

THIS IS YOUR DREAM WORLD, FEMTO.

THE SEPARATION FROM MY MOTHER, AS WELL..

MY SUDDEN "DEATH" WAS VERY BITTER.

I KNOW.

AND I HAVE ALSO BEEN ABLE TO BEFRIEND YOU.

LIKE TOKIWA...

BUT IF THAT HADN'T HAPPEN ... I WOULDN'T ...

THE MASTER AND THE JAPANESE SPIRITS...

THE COUNT...

...I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO MEET ALL THESE OTHER PEOPLE.

FEMTO...?

S-SINCE WHEN HAVE YOU BEEN THERE?!

BOYS.

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN TALKING ABOUT?

YOU SEEM A LITTLE DIFFERENT TODAY.

BASTET?!

HEH!

COMPARED TO THE CHILDISH FEMTO, YOU'RE PRETTY SEXY.

WOMEN'S INTUITION IS A SCARY THING.

OH...

I...

SO?

WHO IS THIS BOY OVER HERE?

I AM, UH...

WHAAAAAT?!

WHAT DID YOU SAY?

NOW, NOW. NOW ...

OH MY.

YOU'RE CHILDISH BECAUSE YOU STILL GET MAD AT BEING CALLED CHILDISH.

HOW RUDE! HOW AM I CHILDISH?!

You shouldn't fight

How rude! You're just too small!

You giant woman!

R R R

OH!

Incoming Call
Tokiwa

TOKIWA!!

YOUR HIGHNESS, YOUR PHONE HAS BEEN RINGING.

OH!

WHERE AM I?

THIS TIME, I WAS EXORCISING A LARGE DOG SPIRIT AND DIDN'T THINK IT WOULD BE GOOD FOR YOU TO COME.

SINCE I GOT IT TO GO TO HEAVEN, I'M GOING HOME NOW.

I HEARD FROM THE MASTER THAT YOU'RE AT THE PET SHOP RIGHT NOW. DON'T BE SO DEPRESSED.

I-I WASN'T DEPRESSED.

OH, FEMTO?!

IT'S ME, TOKIWA.

WH-WHAT DO YOU WANT NOW?

HAMBURGER? OMLETTE RICE? SINCE I GOT SOME MONEY, WE COULD GO ALL OUT AND GET SOME SUSHI.

OH YEAH, WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE FOR DINNER?

ARE...ARE YOU TRYING TO MAKE IT UP TO ME WITH FOOD?!

I EVEN BOUGHT YOU SOME SOUVENIRS. I GOT YOUR FAVORITE CANNED TREATS.

I'LL PICK YOU UP AT KABUKI-CHO, SO WAIT THERE.

HE ALWAYS TREATS ME LIKE A CHILD.

THERE IS STILL STRENGTH IN THE INCENSE.

BECAUSE OF THAT, WE WOKE UP FASTER THAN EXPECTED.

IT TURNED OUT WELL THOUGH.

COME TO THINK OF IT...

HUH?!

WHERE IS AMON?

HMPH!

.....

HE'S STILL IN THE DREAM WORLD?

HE HASN'T WOKEN...?!

AMON!!

THAT'S HOW IT WOULD SEEM...YES.

YOU MEAN THAT WE'VE RETURNED AND LEFT HIM ALL ALONE IN ANCIENT EGYPT?!

HUH?

BUT--

THERE IS NO NEED FOR THAT.

IT'S ALL RIGHT.

.....

BURN SOME MORE INCENSE.

I WILL GO PICK HIM UP.

HE IS EXPERI-ENCING...

...A VERY PEACEFUL AND BEAUTIFUL DREAM.

LET US WAIT UNTIL HE AWAKENS NATURALLY.

COUNT...?

THE ONE IN KABUKI-CHO IN SHINJUKU, JAPAN.

THIS IS THE PET SHOP.

WHERE... AM I?

THERE WAS A CASTLE MADE OF STONE.

THERE WAS A BIG FIELD AND A GREAT RIVER...

I WENT TO ANCIENT EGYPT WITH YOU AND THE LITTLE PHARAOH.

OH ...

SO THAT WAS ALL A DREAM.

AND THEN?

AND THEN...

BUT IN THE MIDDLE OF IT YOU ALL DISAP-PEARED ...

WHAT KIND OF DREAM DID YOU HAVE?

WHEN I BECAME AN ADULT, I MARRIED BASTET.

AND THEN...

...WE HAD CHILDREN.

OH...?!

HOW STRANGE... IN MY DREAM I LIVED IN THAT COUNTRY FOR ABOUT 10 YEARS.

I-WAS-CONSIDERED-A-CAT-GOD-AND-WAS-TREASURED-BY-THE-PEOPLE.

BUT A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN CAT NAMED BASTET HELPED ME VERY MUCH...

THEN I WAS IN TROUBLE BECAUSE I WAS ALONE...

BUT I BECAME A GHOST...

...AND I WATCHED AS MY CHILDREN AND THEIR DESCENDENTS LIVED AND DIED.

THEY CONTINUED TO GROW IN NUMBERS AND...

...STARTED TO SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

THEY WERE VERY CUTE.

THEY ALL HAD HAIR.

THE CHILDREN ALL LOOKED LIKE HER--

I WAS SO VERY SAD.

THEN, SOON AFTER, I ALSO DIED.

--BASTET DIED FIRST.

WE BOTH GREW OLD AND--

I CONTINUED TO FLOAT IN THE AIR...

...WATCHING OVER BASTET AND MY CHILDREN.

SO MANY CENTURIES...

SO MANY DECADES...

SOMETHING LIKE THAT WOULD HAPPEN EVERY FEW DECADES AND REPEAT ITSELF.

EVERY SO OFTEN...

...THERE WAS A CHILD JUST LIKE MYSELF, WHO HAD NO HAIR.

I SEE.

THEN, ONE DAY...

LOOK, LOOK! HOW TERRIBLE!!

MOMMY!

DADDY!

THEY USUALLY DIED.

THAT CHILD'S BODY WOULD BE WEAK AND HIS SIBLINGS WOULD PUSH HIM AWAY. HIS MOTHER WOULD ALSO GIVE UP ON HIM.

IT SEEMS A LITTLE CREEPY.

AT THIS RATE, NO ONE WILL TAKE IT IN.

OH MY, YOU'RE RIGHT.

I WONDER IF IT'S A SKIN DISEASE...?

ONE OF THEM DOESN'T HAVE ANY HAIR.

BUT...

"OH, SO IT HAPPENS AGAIN..." IS WHAT I THOUGHT.

DADDY. MOMMY.

IF IT'S MILK, I CAN FEED HIM USING A MILK BOTTLE.

IF YOU LOOK AT HIM CLOSELY, HIS LITTLE WRINKLES ARE PRETTY CHARMING.

IF NO ONE ELSE WILL TAKE HIM, WE CAN KEEP HIM IN OUR HOUSE.

IT'LL BE OKAY!

HE WILL PROBABLY DIE SOON.

HIS VOICE IS WEAK AND HE DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE THE STRENGTH TO DRINK HIS MOTHER'S MILK.

THAT, TOO.

WAS THAT A DREAM AS WELL?

I WILL RAISE HIM PROPERLY.

AFTER PASSING THROUGH MANY CENTURIES...

...THE BLOOD OF THE CAT GOD CARRIES ON...

CHAPTER 10 END

Pet catalog

The red-back widow spider (Lactrodectus hasselti) is originally from southeastern Asia and Australia. They are poisonous. Lately I have been playing spider solitaire and got addicted to it. It has even hindered my progress in creating manga. There are no exciting or heart-pounding moments in it, but before I know it, a lot of time has passed. The spider's trap is a scary thing...

SPIDER'S WEB

There has been news about the avian flu these past two or three years around the world. I thought Count D must have something to say about this. At least that was the original idea. But...somehow it ended up with a lot of crowds. There were army vehicles, too, and a lot of scenes of death, which were very troublesome...for my assistants. (Laughs)

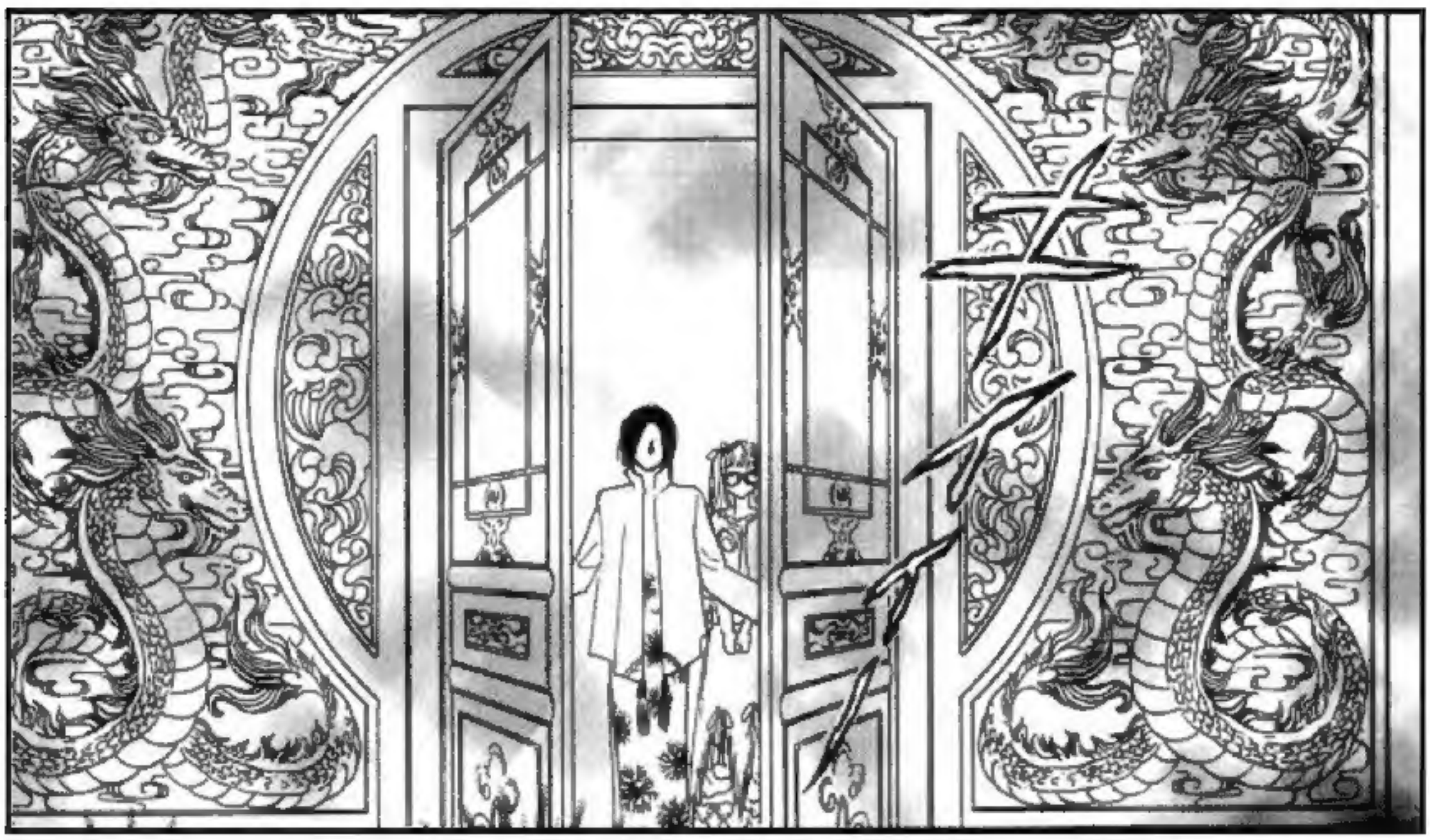
IBIS

KURAGE

This is how it's written and pronounced in Japanese. In English, this is jellyfish. Last year there was an invasion of the giant Echizen jellyfish on Japanese shores. There were many reasons suggested, such as the eutrophication, or increase of chemical nutrients, of the waters in China and Russia as well as global warming. It's apparently pretty amazing. In old science fiction movies, I thought the evil aliens from Mars looked like jellyfish. I think if we're ever attacked by aliens like we have been by the Echizen jellyfish, our world would be taken over.

CAT

The Sphynx... Like I said in the story, they are the result of a sudden mutation. If they only appear in irregular periods, they aren't accepted as a breed. So in order to increase the percent of the gene, they bred the sibling and parent cats together. Because of this, the sphynx tend to have weak bodies, but sometimes they are born with a body structure similar to that of the original cat. Well, on another subject, currently in Japan, most of the people who have a sphynx as a pet (although they are considered an eccentric hobby) raise them with much love.



In our next volume...

When Count D is caught between two yakuza families in a modern day Romeo and Juliet romance, will his help result in an ending as tragic as the Shakespeare version? Or will he be able to bring the star-crossed lovers together without causing a mafia war? And when a popular actress is having trouble with a stalker, Count D comes to the rescue with the perfect pet.

All of this and more fun with Woo-Fei... You know you don't want to miss it.

Volume 4 of Pet Shop of Horrors: Tokyo is coming your way in May, 2009!